

SERMONS

BY THE LATE

REV. WILLIAM ELISHA FAULKNER,

K

MINISTER OF ELY CHAPEL; LECTURER OF ST. GILES'S
IN THE FIELDS; AND ONE OF THE EVENING
LECTURERS OF ST. ANTHOLIN'S,
WATLING-STREET.



London :

Printed by Bye and Law, St. John's Square ;

AND SOLD BY

F. AND C. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;

C. LAW, AVE-MARIA-LANE;

T. WILLIAMS, NO. 156, LEADENHALL-STREET; AND
KENT AND SON, STATIONERS, NO. 116, HIGH HOLBORN.

1799.

ADVERTISEMENT.

MRS. FAULKNER desires, in the most grateful and respectful manner, to return thanks to her Friends for their very liberal encouragement of this Volume of her late Husband's Sermons; and it is her sincere wish that, by the Divine Blessing, they may prove some compensation for the Christian sympathy so generally expressed under her late heavy affliction.

No. 110, Newgate-street,
June 1, 1799.

ADVERTISEMENT

Mrs. FULTON, of the well known
and respected name, is about to be
issued for the first time, a new
and complete edition of her
and it is her father's wish, for the
Bible, that they may give some
the Christian's opportunity to
understand the true meaning of

No. 107, New York
1855

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

On the Duty of Ministers as Stewards.

A Probationary Sermon at St. Giles's in the Fields,
Sunday, Aug. 15, 1790.

1 Cor. iv. 2.

<i>IT is required in Stewards that a man be found faithful</i>	Page
- - - - -	3

SERMON II.

The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.

ISAIAH lv. 1.

Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price - - - 27

SER-

CONTENTS.

SERMON III.

The wise and the foolish Builder.

St. MATT. vii. 24—28.

	Page
<i>Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it</i>	47

SERMON IV.

David's Fall and Repentance.

2 SAM. xii. 7.

<i>—Thou art the Man!</i>	67
----------------------------------	----

SERMON V.

The Resurrection to Life and to Condemnation.

St. JOHN v. 28, 29.

<i>The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation</i>	93
--	----

SER-

CONTENTS.

SERMON VI.

On Soul Prosperity.

3 St. JOHN, ver. 2.

<i>Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth</i>	Page 111
--	-------------

SERMON VII.

On Cain's Rejection and Abel's Acceptance with God.

GENESIS IV. 3, 4, 5.

<i>And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell</i>	129
---	-----

SERMON VIII.

On the Necessity of having the Spirit of Christ.

ROM. viii. ver. 9. latter part.

<i>—If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his</i>	151
---	-----

CONTENTS.

SERMON IX.

On the Widow's Son raised to Life.

St. LUKE vii. ver. 13. latter part.

	Page
— <i>Weep not</i> - - - - -	173

SERMON X.

The Paralytic healed.

St. MATT. ix. ver. 2. latter part.

— <i>Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee</i> -	193
--	-----

SERMON XI.

Glorying in the Cross of Christ.

GALATIANS vi. 14.

<i>God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world</i> -	213
---	-----

SERMON XII.

Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

St. JOHN xiv. 6.

<i>Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me</i> - - - - -	233
---	-----

SER-

CONTENTS.

SERMON XIII.

The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

St. MATT. ii. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11.

Page

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. And lo! the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh

253

SERMON XIV.

On the Nativity.

St. LUKE ii. 1—7.

And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David; to be taxed with Mary

CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.</i>	
<i>And so it was that while they were there the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.</i>	
<i>And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn</i>	275

SERMON XV.

The Incredulity of St. Thomas respecting
our Lord's Resurrection.

St. JOHN XX. 24, 25.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe - - 301

SERMON XVI.

The Work of the Holy Spirit in convincing
of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment.

St. JOHN xvi. 8—11.

When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged - - 325

SER-

CONTENTS.

SERMON XVII.

The Nature and Obligations of abstaining
from the Appearance of Evil.

1 THESS. v. 22.

	Page
<i>Abstain from all appearance of evil</i> - - -	345

SERMON XVIII.

Summer and Harvest emblematical of the
Seasons of Grace and Salvation.

JEREMIAH viii. 20.

<i>The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved</i> - - -	371
---	-----

SERMON XIX.

Observations on the Character of those that
are appointed to obtain Salvation by our
Lord Jesus Christ.

1 THESS. v. 9.

<i>For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ</i> -	391
---	-----

SER-

CONTENTS.

SERMON XX.

Charity to poor Children recommended from
the Compassion of Pharaoh's Daughter to
Moses.

EXODUS II. 5, 6.

Page

*When she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her
maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it,
she saw the child; and, behold, the babe wept,
and she had compassion on him, and said, This
is one of the Hebrew's children*

413

SER-

SERMON I.

ON THE
DUTY OF MINISTERS AS STEWARDS.

FROM I COR. IV. 2.

James M. Ellland
A
PROBATIONARY SERMON

AT
ST. GILES'S IN THE FIELDS,

SUNDAY, AUG. 15, 1790.

His Book

B

SERMON I.

DUTY OF MINISTERS AS STEWARDS.

PROBATIONARY SERMON

ST. GILES IN THE FIELDS.

SUNDAY, AUG. 12, 1906.

On the Duty of Ministers as Stewards
who (I will not the death of a sinner, but
rather that he should trust and live," does
therefore continue in his Church a succession
of Ministers: in order whose peculiar
province it is, to care for the souls of their

1 COR. IV. 2.
*It is required in Stewards, that a man be
found faithful.*

THE salvation of the immortal soul
should be the first and principal con-
cern of every man; "What is a man pro-
fited, if he shall gain the whole world,
" and lose his own soul?" But owing to
the several cares and pleasures of this life
with which they are surrounded, and the
natural dislike which they have to think of
that solemn period, when they must bid an
eternal farewell to every thing dear to them
on earth; most men need to be frequently
reminded of "the things which belong unto
their peace;" to be often told how short
and uncertain their time is, and how im-
portant the enquiry, "What must I do to be
saved?"

to account of us as the Ministers of Christ
"God, who is loving unto every man,
" and whose mercy is over all his works;"

4 *On the Duty of Ministers as Stewards.*

who "willeth not the death of a sinner, but
"rather that he should turn and live," does
therefore continue in his Church a succession
of Ministers; an order of men, whose peculiar
province it is, to care for the souls of their
fellow-creatures, to expound to them the di-
vine word and will, and to "rebuke and
"exhort them with all long-suffering and
"doctrine." This is an office the most
honourable in the sight of God and man,
and a charge the most sacred and important:
and, in order that Ministers may so consider
it, they are called in Scripture by the signi-
ficant names of *Messengers*, *Watchmen*, and
Stewards; "If our brethren be enquired of,
" (said St. Paul to the Corinthians, 2d Epist.
"viii. 23.) they are the Messengers of the
"churches." The Prophet Ezekiel tells us,
Chap. iii. 16, 17. that "the word of the
"Lord came unto him, saying, Son of man,
"I have made thee a Watchman unto the
"house of Israel:" and the Apostle begins
the chapter out of which our text is taken,
with this solemn introduction—"Let a man
"so account of us as the Ministers of Christ,
"and Stewards of the mysteries of God."
They are likewise called by these expressive
titles

On the Duty of Ministers as Stewards. 3

titles in that solemn charge delivered to those who are ordained according to the form of our Church: the Prelate addresses them, and says, "We exhort you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge you are called; that is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord."

Having premised these things, I shall now, adhering strictly to the text, confine myself to speak of Ministers under the notion of *Stewards*; shew what is required in them as such; and what is implied in the requirement, "It is required in Stewards, that a man be found faithful." This subject will not, I trust, be thought altogether unseasonable, and, with a few words of improvement, it will, I hope, profitably engage your attention.

Now a *Steward*, brethren, is a *servant*, a chief servant, one who is in an especial manner entrusted with his master's goods, and whose business it is to dispense them to his fellow-servants, according as they have need.

6 *On the Duty of Ministers as Stewards.*

A *Steward* is also one that must give an account of himself and of his stewardship to his lord and master, whensoever he shall call upon him.—Such is a Minister of Jesus Christ, he is a servant of the living God.

Time would fail me to bring to your remembrance the many places in Scripture where Ministers are called the Servants of God. That a Minister is a chief servant, no one will hesitate to admit, who reflects a moment on the nature of his office—"to give
" to the Lord's household their portion of spi-
" ritual meat in due season." And, that a Minister has not only an account to give of himself as a *Man*, but as a *Minister*, both Reason and Revelation prove. Reason says, that the account which every one must give, is of the talents which he has received, and of the manner he has conducted himself in that situation of life to which it hath pleased God to call him: and Revelation says, that Ministers "watch for souls, as they that
" must give account." Ministers no more escape the just judgment of God, than they escape death; and that they escape not death, the very occasion of my addressing you proves;
yes,

yes, "It is appointed unto all men once to die, after this the judgment."—"As with the people, so with the priest." Ministers, then, are properly called *Stewards*.

I need not, I trust, observe to you, that there is no character or office in life, but what has its peculiar requirement, and without which grace or virtue, a man manifestly appears unworthy. In a prince, *dignity* is required; in a magistrate, *justice*; in a teacher, *knowledge*; in a soldier, *courage*; in an artist, *ingenuity*; in a friend, *sincerity*; in a parent, *fondness*; in a child, *duty*; in a husband or wife, *affection*. A Steward, therefore, is not without his peculiar requirement, and that is *faithfulness*; "It is required in Stewards, (saith the Apostle) that a man be found *faithful*," it is required—it is indispensable to the character of a good Steward. This is clear to every one who is in the least acquainted with the things of this world, and fully set forth by our blessed Lord in one of his parables, as recorded by St. Luke, chap. xvi. 1, 2. "And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a Steward; and the same was accused unto him that

8 *On the Duty of Ministers as Stewards.*

“ he had wasted his goods ;” the consequence of which was, that “ he called him, and said “ unto him, How is it that I hear this of “ thee ? give an account of thy stewardship, “ for thou mayest be no longer Steward.” Whence we learn, that this man lost his stewardship, because there was not found in him that faithfulness which is required in Stewards.

Now the faithfulness that is required in Stewards, evidently consists in a studious care of all that is committed to their charge ; in dispensing to their fellow-servants according as they need, and not withholding from any their proper portion. The faithfulness, then, that is required in Ministers, who are “ Stewards of the mysteries of God,” consists, according to St. Paul’s charge to the Ephesian elders, Acts xx. 28. “ in taking “ heed to all the flock over which the Holy “ Ghost hath made them overseers, and in “ feeding the church of God, which he hath “ purchased with his own blood ;”—in “ rightly dividing the word of truth, and “ not handling the word of God deceitfully :” so as to be able to say with that faithful Steward,

Steward, in the course of the address already cited, "I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you; wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am free from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," Acts xx. 20, 26, 27.

It is faithfulness in a Minister to tell his hearers that man is a fallen creature, that he is a sinner by nature and by practice, and as such obnoxious to the wrath of God.

Adam, the first man, was our representative; therefore when he fell, we fell in him. St. Paul expressly declares to the Corinthians, 1 Epist. xv. 22. that "in Adam all die;" and again to the Romans, chap. v. 19. that "by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." And our Church, in perfect agreement with him, affirms, in her 9th Article, that "original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." That man, then, is a sinner by nature, both the Bible and our Church decidedly assert; and that he is a sinner

finer by *practice*, both observation and experience fully testify. Let a man examine the conduct of his neighbour—let a man examine himself—who is free from sin? Now, that “the wages of sin is death,” is a truth expressly asserted, and almost universally assented to. It is faithfulness therefore in a Minister to preach this scriptural and orthodox doctrine, (grating as it may be to human pride) because till men are sensible that they are *lost*, they will not enquire about salvation; agreeable to our Lord’s observation, Luke v. 31, 32. “They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous,”—those who fancy themselves so; I am not come to call *them* to repentance, for it is not likely *they* will repent who are not sensible that they have sinned; but I am come to call “sinners,” those who are convinced that they are such,—I am come to call *them* “to repentance.”

Again: It is faithfulness in a Minister to tell his hearers, that there is no salvation for them but in Christ Jesus, “who made on the cross (as our Church expresses it in her Communion-Service) a full, perfect,
“ and

“and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.”

Men are very apt to think of being their own saviours, and to trust in their poor and partial obedience to that law, which is “holy, and just, and good.” They frequently come up to the temple in the spirit of the Pharisee, mentioned by our Lord in the 18th of St. Luke’s Gospel; and because they are not extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as some other men are; because they fast, and give tithes of their possessions, they trust in themselves that they are righteous. This, brethren, is for want of reflection on the nature of the law by which they expect justification. The law is holy and perfect: the language of it is, “This do, and thou shalt live;” but “the soul that sinneth,” in one single instance, “it shall die;” for as St. Paul observes, Gal. iii. 10. “it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Hence it is evident, that nothing short of a *perfect* obedience, can by the law be accounted righteousness, and obtain for us eternal life. And as *perfect* obedience cannot possibly be rendered

rendered to the law by any man living, the declaration of the Apostle, Rom. iii. 20. is fully established, "By the deeds of the law" "there shall no flesh be justified" in God's sight; and that deprecatory prayer of David, with which the public worship of our Church opens, proved to be the proper language of every individual worshipper, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Where then must men look for justification, but to Him "who bore their sins in his own body on the tree?" to Him "who redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them?" How can they be accounted righteous in the sight of God, but through the merits of Jesus Christ; by means of a *living* faith, a faith which "worketh by love," and which, as St. James expresses it, "by works is made perfect;" that is, demonstrated to be *true* faith.

This doctrine is plainly insisted on both by St. Peter and St. Paul; indeed it is clearly taught in every page of the Bible. St. Peter says, Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salva-
tion

tion in any other, for there is none other
name under heaven given among men
whereby we must be saved:” and St. Paul
tells the Ephesians, chap. ii. 8, 9. “By grace
are ye saved, through faith; and that not
of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not
of works, lest any man should boast.”
And that this is the doctrine of the Church
of England, needs but little proof. One of
those sermons, or homilies, appointed to be
read in churches in the days of Queen Eliza-
beth, (entitled, *On the Salvation of Mankind*)
is full and direct to the point. In our 11th
Article it is expressly said, that “We are
accounted righteous before God, only for
the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by
faith, and not for our own works and de-
servings:” and the same is implied through-
out our excellent Liturgy, every petition of
which is made “through Jesus Christ—
through the merits of Jesus Christ—and
this we beg for Jesus Christ his sake.”

Again: It is faithfulness in a Minister to
tell his hearers, that to be made partakers of
the kingdom of heaven, having previously
been justified by the righteousness of Christ
through

14 *On the Duty of Ministers as Stewards.*

through a living faith, they must also be sanctified by the influences of the blessed Spirit, and made new creatures.

This was what our blessed Lord himself insisted on when he said to Nicodemus, John iii. 3. 5. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Man being naturally unholy, and it being clearly revealed, that "without holiness no one shall see the Lord," it plainly follows, that he must undergo a great and an universal change, before ever he can indulge a well-grounded hope of eternal glory; that his affections must be raised from earthly to heavenly things; and that it must become his meat and drink to do the will of God. Now, as this change cannot be produced in man but by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God; that Spirit which must convince him that he is a sinner, and shew him the way of salvation; so when he has received the Spirit, this, according to St. Paul's observation to the Corinthians, 2d Epist. v. 17. will be the certain

certain consequence, he will become a *new creature*; "If any man (saith the Apostle) be
"in Christ, he is a new creature; old things
"are passed away; behold all things are be-
"come new." Now, from this plain, deci-
sive scripture, we are warranted to declare,
that the man who lives in sin, that is, allows
himself in the commission of sin, and gives no
proof, by a visible alteration in his conduct,
that there is a material change in his heart,
or that he is regenerate and born anew of the
Holy Ghost; we are warranted to declare that
such a man is not a *real* Christian, and that
if he imagines he is, he awfully deceives
himself. What said St. Paul to Titus, chap.
ii. 11-13. "The grace of God, that bring-
"eth salvation, hath appeared to all men;
"teaching us, that denying ungodliness and
"worldly lusts, we should live soberly,
"righteously, and godly, in this present
"world; looking for that blessed hope, and
"the glorious appearing of the great God,
"and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave
"himself for us, that he might redeem us
"from all iniquity, and purify unto himself
"a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
Observe; the *same* grace which bringeth sal-
vation,

vation, teacheth the denial of ungodliness; and he that died to *redeem* men, died to *redeem* them from iniquity; to *save* them from the practice of sin, as well as from the punishment due to it; and to make them delight in good works. Surely, then, we may say of good works what we before hinted, and what is declared in our 12th Article, "Albeit, that
 "good works, which are the fruits of faith,
 "and follow after justification, cannot put
 "away our sins, and endure the severity of
 "God's judgment, yet they are pleasing and
 "acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring
 "out necessarily of a true and lively faith,
 "insomuch that by them a lively faith may
 "be as evidently known, as a tree discerned
 "by the fruit."

Once more: It is faithfulness in a Minister to inform his hearers, that they cannot reasonably expect the blessing of God in any way whatever, unless they are diligent in the use of all the means of grace that are afforded them, particularly in hearing and reading the word of God, and in the practice of public and private prayer.

I am

I am fully sensible, that, though “ Paul
“ may plant and Apollos water, it is God
“ alone who must give the increase;” still I
am equally sensible, and I am as thoroughly
persuaded, that he generally gives the increase
according to the use of the means, and I trust
I might appeal for the truth of this to the
experience of many present. For one, like
Saul, stopped in his way to Damascus, and
called with an holy calling, whilst breathing
out threatnings and slaughter against the
Church, thousands have been brought to a
true knowledge of themselves and of the Lord
Jesus Christ by the use of divine ordinances.
Were this properly considered, and the im-
portance of spiritual things duly valued, so
many would “ not forsake the assembling of
“ themselves together;” the sabbaths of the
Lord would not be so frequently polluted, but
men would be glad when it is said unto them,
“ Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord.”
What a blessing it is, brethren, to have the
word of God amongst us! Our Lord once
said to those who were thus favoured, “ Bless-
“ ed are your eyes for they see, and your
“ ears for they hear.” What a privilege is
prayer! in it we may draw nigh unto God, and
C spread

spread our wants before him, under the promise of his assistance; "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, (said our Lord) ye shall receive." And it is the promise of God by Isaiah, chap. xl. 31. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

But however *faithful* a Minister may be in dispensing these and other important truths, unbiassed by the favour and unawed by the fear of man; yet there is something further necessary to compleat his character, and to render him truly respectable and useful. In Stewards among men, "it is *only* required, "that a man be found faithful;" faithful to the trust reposed in him. And it is well known that so long as a Steward is *faithful*, whatever defects there may be in his private life, they are unnoticed by the person with whose property he is entrusted, and indeed by the world in general. But it is not so with the "Ministers of Christ," the "Stewards of the mysteries of God;" for in them it is required, not only that they be found faithful

faithful as to the discharge of their ministerial duties, but that in all respects they approve themselves to be good, honest, and upright men. It is required of a Minister of Christ, a Steward of the mysteries of God; it is required by God himself, by the Church, and even by the world; it is required that his life be a comment on his doctrine—that he be an example to the Lord's household, and able to adopt the apostolic language, “Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ.”

With what little effect is that Minister likely to teach another, who teacheth not himself! How lightly will he be regarded who preaches a man should not commit adultery, whilst himself lives in the commission of the very sin which he reproveth in others! How little will such a man be attended to, though he has the eloquence of a Cicero, or the rhetoric of a Demosthenes, and even speaks with the tongue of an angel! Well therefore did the wise and holy Apostle remind his son Timothy, 1 Epist. iii. 2—8. that “a Bishop” (and doubtless every inferior Minister in the Church of God) must be blameless, the

C 2

“ husband

“ husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good
 “ behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach,
 “ not given to wine, not covetous—that he
 “ must rule well his own house, and have a
 “ good report of them which are without.”
 And our blessed Lord, in that best of sermons
 which he preached upon the mountain, when
 he was cautioning his hearers to “ beware of
 “ false prophets,” gave them this criterion to
 discover and determine those who were to be
 attended to, and those who were not; “ Ye
 “ shall know them (says he) by their fruits,”
 Matt. vii. 16.

I have thus gone through my subject as
 proposed; I have spoken of Ministers under
 the character of Stewards; have shewn what
 is required in them as such; and withal what
 is implied in the requirement. And though
 I can truly say with St. Paul, in the verse
 following my text, that “ with me it is a
 “ very small thing that I should be judged
 “ of man’s judgment; that I judge not
 “ mine own self, but that he that judgeth
 “ me is the Lord;” yet I trust I shall be
 esteemed faithful; that I have satisfied every
 one, whose mind is free from determined pre-
 judice,

judice, that these ideas of the ministerial office are just, and that these sentiments, both respecting doctrine and duty, are scriptural and orthodox.

By way of improvement, I would observe, that as it is required in Ministers, who are "Stewards of the mysteries of God, that a man be found faithful," it is also required in those among whom they exercise their ministry, and speak the truth in love, that they act like the noble Bereans, and "search the scriptures daily, to see whether those things are so," and, through the grace of God, "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls," James i. 21.

There are, alas! too many who are mere hearers of the word: the Apostle in the chapter just quoted, ver. 23, 24. compares them to "a man, who beholding his natural face in a glass, goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." And how descriptive is this of their real character! They hear that they are sinners; that there is salvation for them in Christ, and in

22 *On the Duty of Ministers as Stewards.*

Christ alone ; that they must be made new creatures ; that an entire change must be wrought in their hearts and lives, or they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven ; and that they cannot expect the blessing of God in any other way than in the use of his appointed means of grace. They seem affected with the importance of these truths, and yield an assent to them, but after all “ they go their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandize,” and their thoughts are again engrossed by the cares and pleasures of the world, and every serious impression vanisheth like a morning cloud. This is for want of meditation on what they they hear, and from the neglect of fervent prayer to God that he would graft it inwardly in their hearts. Oh ! that men would consider that when *we*, Ministers of the Gospel of Christ, at the last great day, must give an account of our stewardships, those who are committed to our care must give an account of themselves likewise ; and that abused mercies will rise up in judgment, and condemn them ! Brethren, “ there is but a step between us and death.” The sound of the Gospel which you have this day heard, you may hear no more for ever ! Your souls may
this

this night be required of you! It is indeed highly probable, that *some*, out of such a vast assembly as the present, may be very soon numbered with the dead:—the youngest that hears me is old enough to die, and some fatal disease, or some unexpected accident, may be already commissioned to put a period to *his* existence who *least* expects it, and is the *least* prepared for it. Let no one then talk, like Felix, of a more convenient season, look to old age, or trust to a bed of sickness, but “to-day, while it is called to-day,” it is my duty to exhort you to “hear the voice of God “and live,” to meditate on the truths which have been spoken, and lift up your hearts to God for his blessing on them. But am I not speaking to many, who, through the grace of God, have done this?—to many who have obeyed from the heart that form of sound words which has been delivered to them, and of whom the most favourable things may be hoped, even “things that accompany salvation?” But having so long detained you, brethren, I have only time to observe to such, that as they know by happy experience the blessings of a Gospel Ministry, they must not forget in their prayers those

24 *On the Duty of Ministers as Stewards.*

who are called to the important work; they must not forget to pray, as the great Apostle entreats the Ephesians, chap. vi. 19. "that utterance may be given unto them, that they may open their mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel;" and that, by their means, "there may be added unto the church daily such as should be saved," Acts ii. 47.

SERMON II.

THE
GRATUITOUS BLESSINGS OF THE
GOSPEL.

FROM ISAIAH LV. I.

SERMON II.

THE BENEDICTIONS OF THE

GOSSIP.

FROM LEVITICUS IV.

ISAIAH LV. 1.

Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.

ISAIAH has been well stiled, "The Evangelical Prophet," because more particularly and fully than any other of the prophets, he prophesied and wrote concerning Christ and his Church. In the 53d chapter of his book we have an exact account of the character of Christ, of the sufferings to which he submitted for our sake and for our salvation, and of the virtue and efficacy of his death. In the 54th chapter the Church is called upon, by this great Prophet, to rejoice, and not to fear, as no weapon formed against her should prosper, the Holy One of Israel being her Redeemer. And the commencement of this 55th chapter is more like the language of one of those highly-favoured characters who were alive at that blessed fulness of time when
Jesus

28 *The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.*

Jesus honoured the world with his presence, and who were commissioned by him to “ go
“ into all the world, and preach the Gospel
“ to every creature:”—it is more like the language of an Apostle than that of a Prophet, who existed so long before the accomplishment of the promise of a Redeemer—“ Ho !
“ every one that thirsteth, come ye to the
“ waters, and he that hath no money ; come
“ ye, buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine
“ and milk without money, and without
“ price.”

Brethren, this is, or ought to be, the language of every Minister of the Gospel ; this shall be the substance of every address to my fellow-sinners ; we fully execute our high commission when we speak according to these words. Whilst I, therefore, am making them the subject of my present discourse, may they prove useful to the comfort and conversion of you that hear me, that so ye may have cause to say, “ It is good for us to be in the house
“ of the Lord!”

I trust, brethren, that I shall be led to speak on all the particulars of this text, by
replying

replying to the four following questions from the text itself.

1st, To *what* is this invitation?

2dly, *Who* are invited?

3dly, *Whither* are they invited? And,

4thly, On *what* terms is the invitation given?

In the first place, then, To *what* is this invitation? This invitation is, to buy *wine* and *milk*—"Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price."

By *wine* and *milk*, brethren, we are here to understand the Blessings of the Gospel, which are as nourishing, and reviving, and cheering, to the soul, as milk and wine to the body. You need not to be informed what the Blessings of the Gospel are—pardon of sin—peace of conscience—and everlasting salvation. When a child
is

30 *The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.*

is born into the world, there is little hope of its continuance among us without the milk which nature hath provided for its support. And, brethren, there is no hope of any one enjoying spiritual life without the Blessings of the Gospel; wherefore St. Peter exhorts, 1st Epist. ii. 2. that “as new born babes we
“desire the sincere milk of God’s word, that
“we may grow thereby;” that is, the Blessings of the Gospel, made known in holy writ, in order that we may “grow in grace,
“and in the knowledge of our Lord and Sa-
“viour Jesus Christ.”

Wine, the other emblem in our text, is also nutritious, and, in many cases, necessary to be taken for the strengthening and refreshing of the body; inasmuch that St. Paul exhorted his son Timothy, 1 Epist. v. 23. “Drink
“no longer water, but use a little wine for
“thy stomach’s sake, and thine often infir-
“mities.”—And, brethren, when our souls are unacquainted with the Blessings of the Gospel; when we know nothing of the pardon of sin, peace of conscience, and everlasting salvation, we are dead while we have a name to live, and we are in danger of perish-
ing

ing eternally.—Yes, what wine and milk are to the body, that, and infinitely more, are the Blessings of the Gospel to the soul. How miserable is the state of a man who has no reasonable hope of the pardon of sin, no peace of conscience, no well-grounded assurance of everlasting salvation! And *this* is the state of every son and daughter of Adam independent of that redemption which there is in Christ Jesus; for, to repeat that well-known declaration of the Apostle, Acts iv. 12. “Neither
“ is there salvation in any other; for there is
“ none other name under heaven given among
“ men whereby we must be saved.” But, on the contrary, brethren, how happy, yea, how blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven him, whose conscience is at quiet, and who can look beyond the grave with the well-grounded hope of a glorious immortality! Now, *this* is the condition of every faithful disciple of Jesus Christ; of every one to whose soul the Blessings of the Gospel have been mercifully applied.

But again: The invitation in the text is to “buy wine and milk; yea, to buy and
“ eat:” that is, to get the Blessings of the
Gospel

32 *The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.*

Gospel into possession, to make them one's own, and to live in and by the enjoyment of them. Wine and milk, the most choice and the most desirable, will do the body no good, will neither nourish nor revive it, unless they be received; nor, brethren, will it avail the soul merely to contemplate the Blessings of the Gospel, to think and to talk about pardon of sin, peace of conscience, and everlasting salvation. It is much to be feared, that many who have made a very great profession of religion, have died in sin: for it is not a mere profession, however splendid, that will deliver the soul; nothing but a reception of the Gospel into the heart by faith, nothing but an experimental acquaintance with the Blessings of it, witnessed by a holy walking with God, can afford solid comfort in life or in death. And it certainly is one of the most astonishing things in the world, that any man should fancy himself interested in the Blessings of the Gospel who only contemplates them, who only talks of them, and evidences by his conduct that his heart has never been properly devoted to God, but that he is yet in a lost and perishing situation, as a sinner against God.

Our

Our second question is, *Who* are invited? *Who* are invited to buy wine and milk? It is the language of Isaiah, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat."—And from hence we are given to understand, that *all* are invited to receive the Blessings of the Gospel, who are desirous to receive them, however unworthy of them they be—"Ho! every one that thirsteth, come"—you that have no money, you who are poorer than the poorest, come—whosoever will, let him come—whosoever cometh shall in no wise be cast out!—"If any man thirst, (saith Jesus) let him come unto me and drink;" and again, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," Matt. v. 6.

My friends and brethren, it is *our* commission (and praised be the name of that gracious Lord who thus commissioned us!)—it is *our* commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature;" to tell to all, the wonders of redeeming love, the Blessings of the Gospel; to say, in the language of the servant who was sent to invite to the marriage—

34 *The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.*

riage-supper, "Come, for all things are
"ready;"—yes, it is our commission to pro-
claim good tidings to the most guilty and
miserable of the human race, as it was the
command of that servant to invite "the poor,
"the maimed, the halt, and the blind."

When men imitate the conduct of those
who excused themselves from the marriage-
supper, and prefer an attention to their worldly
engagements and pleasures, and neglect so
great salvation as we speak of to them, with
pity for their unhappy rejection of mercy we
are obliged to turn from them, to leave them
in their wretched state: but wheresoever we
find a soul willing to hearken to the joyful
sound, wheresoever we meet with a poor sin-
ner who is made sensible of his natural ruin
and misery, and desirous of becoming a par-
taker of the love of which we speak, *that*
soul we welcome to the marriage-supper,
that soul we bid to rejoice in the Blessings
of the Gospel; we tell him, on the authority
of God, that *all* the Blessings of the Gospel
belong to him—belong to him, notwithstand-
ing his extreme unworthiness of the smallest
mercy.

Methinks,

■ Methinks I hear some penitent broken heart exclaiming, "Your commission is full indeed, but I have been so very undeserving of pardoning love, that to me the Blessings of the Gospel can never extend. I have been not only a neglecter of the public ordinances of God, but one who has despised and ridiculed every thing of a serious nature: besides, I have given myself up to follow the devices of my own heart; I have lived a very dissipated course of life." ■ But hearken, my fellow-sinner: Hath it not pleased God to make you *desirous* of obtaining mercy? hath it not pleased God to *convince* you of sin? Oh! do not oppose yourself, for you are expressly invited by the Scripture before us to partake of Gospel Blessings—"Ho! every one that thirsteth, "come; and you that have no money, come; "buy, and eat." Recollect our Lord's famous parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. They both went up on a certain day to the temple. The Pharisee was for claiming heaven as the reward of his own righteousness; "God, (says he) I thank thee that I am "not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, "adulterers, or even" as the wretched publican, whose unhallowed feet have now dis-

36 *The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.*

honoured thy sanctuary: "I fast twice in
"the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."
The poor publican was like yourself, happily
convinced of his guilt and wretchedness as a
sinner before God, and, like yourself, he was
afraid even to hope for mercy. Our Lord
says, he stood at an humble distance from the
presumptuous Pharisee, and dared not to lift
up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote
upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful
"to me a sinner!" and adds our Lord, "I
"tell you, *this* man went down to his house
"justified rather than the other." Now be
assured from this, that there is mercy for *you*;
that *you*,—even *you*, are invited to partake of
the Blessings of the Gospel salvation; in
short, that *all* are invited who are *desirous*
to partake of them, however unworthy.—
[With God must the event remain, and he
only knows how soon the most unworthy
may be called to a sense of his duty, to such
repentance not to be repented of, as will in-
clude them in the number of those, who
having accepted the invitation, become par-
takers of the wine and milk purchased with-
out money, and without price.]

We

We proceed to our third question, *Whither* are they invited? *Whither* are they who *thirst* invited to come and buy the wine and milk? They are invited to come to the *waters*—"Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the *waters*." The Prophet very probably here alludes to those maritime places, or sea-ports, where ships of merchandize unload their traffic, and where the people resort to purchase what they need. From this part of the text therefore we learn, that they who are desirous of the Blessings of the Gospel are to be invited to come, and are to come to those ordinances which God has appointed, and which he has promised to bless to the comfort of his people. "Ho! every one that *thirsteth*, come ye to the waters:"—ye who are desirous of Gospel Blessings attend the ordinances; be found in the sanctuary, be found in your own houses, be found in your secret chambers, calling upon God. Brethren, the temporal blessings men need, the meat, and drink, and clothing which they require, do not come to them unsought for, they must go to the market and buy. Nor must any man expect to receive the Blessings of the Gospel, while he lives neglectful of the

38 *The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.*

means and ordinances in and through which the Blessings of the Gospel are commonly received. The poor man who had been afflicted for eight and thirty years with a grievous infirmity, came and laid himself at the side of Bethesda's pool, waiting for the moving of the waters. There it was that Jesus met him, and had compassion on him, and bid him "take up his bed and walk." We must thus wait in the ordinances for spiritual blessings, and, brethren, we may be assured, that, in his own good time, the Lord will visit us in mercy. We may come time after time, and receive no comfort: we may put up prayer after prayer, and hear sermon after sermon, with little advantage; but so sure as we continue in the way which God hath prescribed, so sure will he, in his own time, bless the ordinances to our comfort; for he has said, Matt. vii. 7. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." May this stimulate you to perseverance in the use of the means, who are ready to complain that God has forgotten to be gracious! Remember how frequently St. Paul besought the Lord, on a certain occasion, before the

Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." And remember the parable of the unjust judge, which Jesus spake, in order to encourage perseverance, and to stir us up to be importunate in prayer. Yes, brethren, we must come to, and continue in God's ways, if we are desirous of obtaining mercy. Oh! what hope can we entertain of the salvation of those who prostitute the Sabbath to all the purposes of vanity and impiety! What hope can we entertain of the giddy, sinful multitude, who, on this sacred day, (which God hath set apart, and commanded to be kept *holy*, in order that we might have the full benefits of his sanctuary,)—what hope can we entertain of those who crowd the places of levity and dissipation, as though there were no God, no futurity, no day of retribution! Doubtless all power is with God, and he is often "found of them that seek him not." He stopped Saul in his journey to Damascus, and he can dart the arrow of conviction, (whenever it seemeth good to him so to do,) even while men are in the high road to destruction. But surely it argues the greatest folly and madness to expect any thing less than eternal misery out of the ways of God. Come to God's house, be

40 *The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.*

found in God's ways, if you are desirous of God's blessing. Ah! brethren, as many as are desirous to partake of the Blessings of the Gospel, *they* fail not to wait upon God; and may every waiting soul in this assembly know of a truth, know by present happy experience, that wherever a few are gathered together in God's name, he is in the midst of them!

It now only remains that I reply to the fourth question—On *what* terms is the invitation in our text given?—On what terms are they who *thirst* invited to buy wine and milk? Very plainly and decisively does the Prophet here answer, “without money, and
“without price.—Ho! every one that thirst-
“eth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath
“no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea,
“come, buy wine and milk without money,
“and without price.” Hence we are taught, that they who are desirous of being made partakers of the Blessings of the Gospel, shall be made partakers of them *freely*.—Brethren, as we are all unworthy of the least of God's mercies, or, to speak in the language of the text, as we are all *without money*; and as, like the

two debtors in the Gospel, " we have nothing
" to pay ;" we should all for ever remain with-
out hope of the Blessings of the Gospel, were
they offered to us on other terms. Our own
righteousness is miserably defective ; nay, our
very repentance needeth to be repented of, and
our best services are stained with sin. No man
can claim heaven as his due. Indeed, like
the members of the Church of Laodicea,
Rev. iii. 17. some of the members of our
Church say, that " they are rich, and in-
" creased with goods, and that they have
" need of nothing ; and do not know that
" they are wretched, and miserable, and
" poor, and blind, and naked." But igno-
rance of any fact does not tend to destroy it ;
the fact is the same whether known to us or
not. And a fact it is, clearly laid down in
the Scriptures, and confessed by every one
" who knows the plague of his own heart,"
that we are deserving of nothing but God's
displeasure. Glory be to his name that the
Blessings of the Gospel are communicated
freely !—that pardon of sin, peace of consci-
ence, and everlasting salvation, are *freely* be-
stowed !

But

42 *The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.*

But how (methinks you say) does this agree with the term *buy*?—we cannot be said to *buy* that for which we do not give some adequate consideration. My brethren, the word *buy*, is not here to be understood in its usual sense, but merely as expressive of the way by which the Blessings of the Gospel are to be obtained, unless we refer to our Lord Jesus Christ, who with his own blood bought these blessings for us. “Heaven (says one) is the reward of merit, but not of man’s merit, of Christ’s merit:” and we may say, pardon of sin, and all the other Blessings which are offered in the Gospel, are the purchase not of man, but of Christ for man. And, brethren, a thing is equally bought, by whomsoever the value is paid down. They come therefore to us “without money, and without price.” Men are justified *freely* by the grace of God, through the redemption which there is in Christ Jesus. He has paid the price of our redemption; he has purchased the heavenly inheritance for us, by the shedding of his most precious blood, and therefore it may be well said to be ours “without money, and without price.” All that is required of us is, that we humbly
and

and thankfully receive the bounty of our God and Saviour, and, through grace, strive and pray, that we may be enabled to shew forth his praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives: agreeable to St. Paul's admonition to the Corinthian believers, 1 Epist. vi. 20. "Ye are bought with a price; therefore
"glorify God in your body, and in your
"spirit, which are God's." And to that also to his Roman converts, chap. xii. 1, 2. "I
"beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of
"God, that ye present your bodies a living
"sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which
"is your reasonable service. And be not
"conformed to this world; but be ye trans-
"formed by the renewing of your mind, that
"ye may prove what is that good, and ac-
"ceptable, and perfect will of God."

Having thus replied to the proposed questions, arising out of this text of Scripture: from the text itself, I would once again sound the invitation—"Ho! every one that thirst-
"eth, come ye to the waters, and he that
"hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat;
"yea, come, buy wine and milk without
"money, and without price." Brethren,
"Now

44 *The gratuitous Blessings of the Gospel.*

“ Now is the accepted time, now is the day
“ of salvation ;” as the Prophet exhorts in the
6th verse of the chapter, “ Seek ye the Lord
“ whilst he may be found, call ye upon him
“ whilst he is near.” Who can tell what
event to-morrow may make known? No
longer may we be invited to the marriage-
supper—Death may render us incapable of
hearing again the invitation given this day.
Why does any poor sinner neglect so great sal-
vation? Oh! come to Christ, and be ye saved!
May He make us all desirous of Gospel Bless-
ings! And may we all come to the waters,
and freely receive them, to the present and
eternal comfort of our souls!

SER-

SERMON III.

THE

WISE AND THE FOOLISH BUILDER.

FROM ST. MATT. VII. 24—28.

SERMON III.

THE

WISE AND THE FOOLISH BUILDER.

FROM ST. MATTHEW. VII. 24-28.

ST. MATT. VII. 24—28.

Whoſoever beareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wiſe man, which built his houſe upon a rock: And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that beareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them not, ſhall be likened unto a fooliſh man, which built his houſe upon the ſand: And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe; and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

IT was ſaid of Jeſus by the very officers of the Sanhedrin, who were commiſſioned to apprehend him, “Never man ſpake like this man.” And that moſt admirable ſermon which he delivered on the mountain, ever has been, and ever will be, highly eſteemed by all who are ſo happy (ſo bleſſed, I ſhould have ſaid) as to be favoured with it. It not
only

only contains the most perfect system of morals, and instructs us respecting the right performance of religious duties, but it shews man how short he comes of what the divine law requires, in order that he may look up to the heavenly Teacher, both as an example of every thing great and good, and as a Sacrifice and a Saviour. The words which I have just read are the application of that best of sermons, and they are by no means to be esteemed the least excellent and important. Indeed, the sacred wisdom of Jesus *here* appears most conspicuous, and *here* our attention is arrested in a manner uncommonly forcible. The application is short, but pointed, and quite to the purpose; and as it is inimitably calculated to bring home to the heart and conscience every thing contained in the sermon, it may truly be called the very best and most excellent part of it.—“ Who-
 “ ever heareth these sayings of mine, and
 “ doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise
 “ man, which built his house upon a rock:
 “ And the rain descended, and the floods
 “ came, and the winds blew, and beat upon
 “ that house; and it fell not: for it was
 “ founded upon a rock. And every one that
 “ heareth

“ heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth
“ them not, shall be likened to a foolish man,
“ which built his house upon the sand: And
“ the rain descended, and the floods came,
“ and the winds blew, and beat upon that
“ house; and it fell, and great was the fall
“ of it.”

And now, brethren, while you favour me with your wonted attention, I shall make this application of the divinest of sermons the ground, or substance, of my present address; and may God so efficaciously apply it, that you may admire more than ever these words of eternal life!

You will observe, brethren, that our Lord here speaks of an hope of eternal salvation under the idea of an *house*; and of mankind in general, most of whom form or found some hope of salvation, under the notion of *builders*. You will also observe, that he compares the man who should properly adhere to the discourse which he had delivered, to a certain wise man, who built his house upon a rock; and the man who should *not* properly adhere to the discourse, he compares

to a certain foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And you will further observe, that in his description of the safety of the house founded upon the rock, when the rain, the floods, and the winds beset it, he points out the safety of that man's condition, whose hope of salvation is founded aright; and that, in his description of the fall of the house built upon the sand, he points out the wretchedness which that man should dread, whose hope of salvation is *not* founded aright. And there is yet one other thing of which you must not be unmindful, namely, that our Lord here spake of himself (as he is spoken of in many other passages of holy writ) under the notion of a *Rock*. This gives an inexpressible force and beauty to the whole, and justly demands our deepest and most devout attention.

These things premised, I desire to speak freely to you on the important subject which I have before me.

Brethren, there is not one single individual but has a soul to be saved; none of us therefore can call our thoughts too much, or too frequently,

frequently, to the concerns of eternity. And it highly behoves each of us seriously to determine, on *what* we are founding our hope of everlasting salvation—I say, on *what* we are founding our hope; for I cannot, I will not suppose but every one has *some* hope; I conceive we are all building for eternity in some way or other; I doubt not but we are all resting a hope of salvation somewhere:—the grand question is, May we be compared to the wise man, who built his house upon a rock; or to the foolish man, who built his house upon the sand? There is but *one* Rock on which we can build for eternity; but many are the sands on which we may injudiciously rest our hope—only *one* Rock, and that is Jesus Christ; “Other foundation (says the “Apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 11.) can no man lay “than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;” no other either is or can be a sure foundation on which we may build; and Jesus Christ is such a sure foundation, that we may all build here with confidence, and none of us be disappointed of our hope.

I shall not take up your time with drawing parallels between Jesus Christ, the Saviour of

sinners, and a rock; suffice it to say, that *that* which a rock is for the foundation of any house to rest on, Jesus Christ is for a sinner's confidence and trust. He came into the world (glory be to his sacred name!) to live, to suffer, and to die for us miserable creatures; and "he is able (as the Apostle testifies, Heb. vii. 25.) to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." I address myself to all who are weary and heavy laden with the burden of transgression; I speak to the man whose conscience accuses him of having added sin to sin, of having trampled mercies beneath his feet; I speak to the man (if he is here present) who may be ranked among the chief of sinners, and even to him I say, still there is no cause for despair—even to him I say, here is a Rock on which you may come and build for eternity—here is a foundation even for your hope. Cast your confidence and your trust on that Redeemer, who died, the just for the unjust, to bring sinners unto God; and who declared before he gave up the ghost, "It is finished!" No man can be said to build for eternity on a rock, who does not found his hope of salvation on what a Redeemer did and suffered.

Here

Here we *must* build, if we would build aright; and (I speak it for the comfort and encouragement of all who feel the weight of their sins, and are desirous of salvation) *here* we *may* build with safety, however we have transgressed; “the blood of Jesus Christ” (saith the apostle John) cleanseth from all “sin.”

But, brethren, let us remember *how* we are to build on this Rock of Ages; let us remember *who* the man is that may be compared to the *wise* builder.—Here we have opportunity of refuting all those opinions so false and so dishonourable to the Gospel of Christ, which, according to the declaration of St. Paul; lead men to exclaim, “What shall we say then? “Shall we continue in sin that grace may “abound?” Here we take occasion to set forth, that while Jesus saves the chief of sinners, he saves them in the way of holiness. Here we shew, that though the vilest of sinners may build with safety on the provided Rock, they cannot build here till truly penitent, till sin becomes loathsome to them, and till they desire salvation from the *power* as well as the *punishment* of sin.—“Whosoever

“ heareth my sayings, and doeth them, (saith Jesus) I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock.” Was the man safe who cried out, “ Lord! Lord!” was Jesus the Saviour of those who merely acknowledge his ability to save, true would it be, that every professor, whatever was his life and conversation, was secure: but it is far different; no man can be said to build aright on the Rock of Ages, who, while he relies with gratitude and confidence on the merits of the Son of God, doth not look to him as an *example* as well as a *Saviour*, and, through the grace which he receives out of his fulness, doth not endeavour to imitate him in all his imitable perfections; ever reviewing for these purposes the discourse, of which our present text is the application.—“ Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them”—the man who, from this discourse, looks to me both as an *example* and a *Saviour*.

Is it thus, brethren, that you who are resting your hope of salvation on Jesus Christ, are resting it? Remember he declares, Matt. vii. 21. “ Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord,

“ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;
“ but he that doeth the will of my Father
“ which is in heaven.” The very chiefest of
sinners may found a hope of salvation on the
Rock of Ages, (and on nothing else can any
man found a hope with safety) but he must
found his hope in the right manner: he must
not suppose that Jesus will support him in
the great day, if he *retains* the love of sin;
“ Let every one (saith the Apostle) that
“ nameth the name of Christ depart from
“ iniquity.” However firm the rock which
a builder makes choice of whereon to erect
his habitation, he must build aright, or the
house will not stand. And we, brethren, who
build for salvation on Jesus Christ, must act
like the *wise* builder, and build according to
order, or we shall be disappointed of our
hope.—I repeat it—Jesus Christ is able and
willing “ to save *all* to the uttermost who
“ come unto God by him;” but all who
come, must come, desiring deliverance from
the power and tyranny of sin. The man who
is likened unto the *wise* man, that built his
house upon a rock, is not, recollect, the *mere*
professor, but the professor who evidences
himself from his *practice* to be a possessor.

I pray God that this may be recollected to a good purpose!

But I said, brethren, there is but *one Rock* on which we may build for eternity. Many are the sands on which we may injudiciously rest our hope; and justly is that man likened to the *foolish* builder, who places his hope of salvation on any thing but that *sure* foundation which God hath graciously laid in Sion. Foolish indeed, brethren, are ye, whosoever of you are vainly imagining, that so long as you are *hearers* of the word of God, so long as you make an external profession of religion, all will be well with you at last. What says St. James? “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” Strange! that any man can be so simple as to think all can be well with him, when he is a lover of pleasure, more than a lover of God; and when, though occasionally present in the house of God, it is merely out of form and custom, and for the sake of appearances before the world.

Foolish, likewise, are ye, whosoever of you are depending on the great mercy of God, while

while his present goodness does not lead you to repentance. God is merciful, indeed, but God is also just, and too pure to behold iniquity. The mercy of God can only be relied on through the sacrifice of Jesus, in whom mercy and truth met together for our salvation. While you are neglecting God's mercy in Christ, in vain you build upon mercy. God out of Christ is a consuming fire. The most righteous of the sons of men could not appear righteous before God but in and through the Redeemer; how much less *you*, who are living according to the corrupt maxims of the present evil world!

Again: Foolish are ye, whosoever of you are resting your hope of eternal salvation on your poor and partial obedience to the divine law. Far be it from me to speak lightly of any christian duty; but, brethren, the man who forgets that Christ is the *only Rock*, and places confidence in his own imperfect righteousness, that man is building his house on the sand. We should learn the lesson which Jesus taught, when he said to his disciples, Luke xvii. 10. "When ye shall have done
" all those things which are commanded you,
" say,

“ say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do;” and till we learn this lesson, we cannot be said to be like the “ wise man, who built his house upon a rock.”

I must, however, add, though I have already hinted at it, foolish indeed are ye, whosoever of you are contenting yourselves with being *professors*, and depending on what Jesus has done and suffered, while you manifest, by your life and conversation, that you are not, with all your head knowledge, real *possessors* of divine grace! To do away and discourage such a false and miserable hope, was one of the grand purposes for which our divine Teacher made the admirable application of his divine sermon. This appears from the connection of the words with those that precede them. Jesus concluded his discourse with declaring, that in the great and solemn day of judgment he would not own the *mere professors* of his religion: and he introduces the application with the term *Therefore*, shewing, that while the hope of the possessor would abide the day of trial, the hope of the mere professor would assuredly fall.

Once

Once more, then, brethren, let me remind you, that the grand question is, May we be compared to the "*wise* man, who built his "house upon a rock?" or to the "*foolish* man, who built his house upon the sand?" I beseech you seriously to consider the different situations of the two buildings. When "the "rain descended, and the floods came, and "the winds blew," the *wise* man's house stood the violent attack, the storm and tempest did not affect it—"it fell not, (saith "Jesus) for it was founded upon a rock:" but the habitation of the *foolish* man could not outlive the beat of the boisterous weather—"it fell, (saith our Lord) and great was the "fall of it." Hence learn the safety of your condition, if your hope of salvation is founded properly on the Rock of Ages; and hence be admonished of your danger of falling into the bottomless abyss, if you are resting upon a hope comparable to sand. Think of that great day of trial which is drawing nearer and nearer. Think of that day in which the sun and the moon will be darkened, the stars fall from their courses, and the very powers of heaven be shaken. Think of that great day when Jesus will come to judge the world

in

in righteousness ; when, according to the strong language of the prophet Isaiah, chap. xxviii. 17. " judgment will be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet ;" and when the hail will sweep away every refuge of lies, and the waters overflow every hiding-place. Your hope of salvation, I say, properly founded on the Rock of Ages, you will be safe in the midst of all the thunders of heaven, secure and steadfast will you stand before God's tribunal. But your hope of salvation being built only upon the sand, fall it must, and *great* indeed will be its fall ! so *great*, that no distress ever known or felt before, can be compared with that which will then agitate and distract you ; and the greater will be your misery, in proportion as your hope of happiness was formed.

" Knowing the terrors of the Lord (saith " the Apostle) we persuade men." And, from the premises here laid down, I would persuade every individual present, to be careful *where* and *how* he reposes his hope of salvation ; warning him, that " other foundation can no man lay," with safety, " than " that is laid ;" and that the *mere professor* of religion

religion—the formalist—the worldling—and the self-righteous, will be awfully disappointed when God shall summon the nations before him.

And while, with St. Paul, I would persuade men by the *terrors* of the Lord; with him, likewise, would “ I beseech them by “ the *mercies* of God.” How merciful is God in providing for us a *Rock*, on which we may build successfully for eternity! “ Be-
“ hold, (saith the Lord God) I lay in Sion a
“ sure foundation!” Oh! may this mercy constrain you all to imitate the wise builder! to avail yourselves of his prudence and diligence immediately!—A man who builds well must be a man in health and strength; a dying man, a man full of sickness and disease, cannot build safely on the firmest rock. I wish hence to infer, that a man upon his death-bed, who has all his life long been indifferent to eternal concerns, however convinced of sin, cannot look up to Jesus with that confidence with which the man in health looks up to him. Jesus is always “ able to
“ save to the uttermost those that come unto
“ God by him.” But remember, he is to be
looked

looked to as an *example* as well as a *Saviour*; and how can a man take Jesus for an example, when he has scarce another moment to remain in the world? It is granted, that in some particular cases more than ordinary grace may be vouchsafed, and God has at any time an undoubted right of shewing mercy even on the most abandoned sinner, who only applies to him at the eleventh hour, and desires to rest his hope on the finished salvation of Jesus Christ: still, the call of Scripture is *to-day*, and not *to-morrow*; the present, not the future—"Now is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." And the very passage on which we have been discoursing, requires us to prepare for the storm of death as well as judgment. Certainly, the day of judgment is the great day when our hope will be particularly tried, but it will be tried somewhat in the hour of death; and unless we are *then* founded properly on the Rock of Ages, that severe conflict may so affright us, that our very senses may flee away, and leave us—what shall I say?—to the *mercies* of God?—must I not say, to the *judgments* of God?

Think,

Think, I pray you, of these important things. Let sincere Christians comfort one another with the words which have been spoken; and let all others take the alarm, and, while it is time, provide firm support against the day when all nature shall be thrown into convulsions, and God shall enter into judgment. God grant we may all be led to see *where* and *how* we should rest our hope of everlasting salvation! and not only led to *see* this, but be enabled immediately to *imitate* the wise man, who built his house upon the rock! And in the hour of death and day of judgment may we appear with christian boldness, knowing in whom we have believed! May none of us act like the foolish man, who built his house upon the sand, and in the day of calamity experience the consequence of such folly! The Lord endue us all with the wisdom which is from above; and may we live to his praise, and honour, and glory, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Think I pray you of these important things, for sincere Christians comfort one another with the words which have been spoken; and let all others take the alarm, and while it is time, provide that support against the day when all nature shall be thrown into convulsions, and God shall enter into judgment. God grant we may all be led to the where we should rest our hope of everlasting salvation, and not only led to it, but be enabled immediately to receive the wisdom which shall be made upon the rock. And in the hour of death and day of judgment may we appear with shining robes, knowing in whom we have believed. May none of us act like the foolish man, who built his house upon the sand, and in the day of calamity experience the consequence of such folly. The Lord conduct us all with the wisdom which is from above; and may we live to his praise, and honour, and glory through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

SERMON IV.

DAVID'S FALL AND REPENTANCE.

FROM 2 SAM. XII. 7.

SERMON IV.

DAVID'S FALL AND REPENTANCE.

FROM 2 SAM. XII.

2 SAM. xii. 7.

—Thou art the Man!—

“**L**ET him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”—These are the words of an inspired Apostle, and a more important and necessary warning cannot possibly be given to the professors of religion. It is the doctrine of our Church, in her 9th Article, (a doctrine which the experience of the best of men will not suffer them to controvert,) that “the infection of nature (from original sin) remains even in them that are regenerated.” And hence the necessity and the importance of the Apostle’s warning fully appears; for if the infection of nature remains in them, the most eminent Christians are liable to fall into the foulest crimes, when they relax in the exercises of prayer and watchfulness, and when so relaxing, temptation is set before them. Of this (without taking notice of the miscarriages of other men) we have a sad example in the life

of David. The chapter preceding that out of which our text is taken, gives us an account of the fall of this great man. Can we read the account, and boast of our own security? Can we learn how David fell, and pride ourselves in our own strength?—"Let him (I repeat the words of the Apostle)—let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

David, it seems, had conceived and cherished an unlawful passion. And here, suffer me to observe, *here* was the first beginning of his fall. Had he resisted his corrupt inclination, the sin into which it afterwards betrayed him would have been avoided; but the encouragement which he gave to the temptation was the cause of his shameful fall. We know not what we do when we begin to entertain improper and inordinate affections; sin, when it is once indulged and cherished, gains more and more possession of our hearts, and soon, yea, very soon, we are "led captive by the devil at his will." Let us then be ever on our guard, and never cease our supplications at the throne of grace, but, according to our Lord's admonition, Matt.

xxvi. 41. "watch and pray that we enter
"not into temptation."

David, we learn, was given to understand, that the object who had attracted his affections was "Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, "the wife of Uriah the Hittite," a brave and valiant officer, who was at that time in the actual service of his king and country. But, notwithstanding this, the infatuated monarch was determined on making himself master of her person; and accordingly it is said, chap. xi. 4. "David sent messengers and took "her;" making himself, by that atrocious act, partaker with the adulterers. And indeed nothing less than this was to be expected; it was the consequent effect of not resisting his corrupt inclination at the first; it was turning a deaf ear to the *still small voice* of reason and of conscience. And may we not hence learn, not to suffer passion to preside over us, but coolly to reflect on the nature of the conduct to which our inclinations prompt us, and to regulate ourselves by the divine law? If we do not hence learn this lesson, in vain we boast of our discipleship; if, in the hour of temptation, we reason not

with one who would have taught king David a more becoming conduct, "How can I do " this great wickedness, and sin against God?" we disgrace our holy vocation, and inevitably become the conquered prey of that roaring lion, who, as St. Peter has admonished us, 1 Pet. v. 8. "walketh about seeking whom " he may devour."

We are next informed, that Bathsheba no sooner perceived that her infidelity to her husband was likely to be known, (for we cannot suppose that she took much thought respecting the dishonour which would accrue to David)—we are next, I say, informed, that Bathsheba no sooner perceived that her infidelity to her husband was likely to be publicly known, than she seriously acquainted the partner of her crime with her situation, very probably, that he might devise some expedient for concealing the matter from Uriah. And from this part of the history we are led to suppose that all the fault did not lay with David. Highly criminal indeed it was that he should so disgrace himself, and not resist temptation; but it should seem that Bathsheba was very far from being blameless: for, be-

sides

fides her imprudence in exposing herself to the notice of David, it does not appear that when he sent the messengers to take her she made any resistance; especially, as the history of this shameful transaction leads us to suppose, that it was her desire to have it altogether concealed from her husband, whereas, had she been intentionally innocent, she could have had nothing to fear from a full disclosure.—Here I cannot but remark, that while too many of our sex are shamefully abandoned to the indulgence of their sensual passions, there are some of the other sex, who, by their light and unbecoming conduct, are the unhappy causes of their own ruin. Oh! that you may receive this friendly admonition, my female hearers, and, by the example of Bathsheba, avoid laying snares for yourselves and others; always observing the strictest rules of modesty and decorum, and, according to apostolic advice, “abstain from all appearance of evil.”

We go on to read, brethren, the contrivance of David, that Uriah might know nothing of his wife's infidelity, that his own character might not be exposed, and that he might

continue in his wickedness free from censure. And a most dreadful and detestable contrivance it was!—Having sent to the camp for Uriah, and finding that he would not (either on account of some suspicion he entertained, or because of its not being customary for officers in the time of war to allow themselves in such an indulgence)—finding that he would not go down to his house, and associate with his wife, (by which means David's sin would have been secreted from the eyes of men) David, we learn, called him, and in order, no doubt, to do away his suspicions, and to make him forget and swerve from his resolution, entertained him at his own table, and (shocking to relate!) intoxicated him. This, however, not producing the intended effect, he the next morning wrote a letter to Joab, the captain of his host, and sent it by the hand of Uriah, and, as the sacred historian informs us, chap. xi. 15. “ he wrote in the
 “ letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the fore
 “ front of the hottest battle, and retire ye
 “ from him, that he may be smitten and
 “ die.”—Dreadful, diabolical contrivance indeed! Joab, we find, too readily obeyed the king's command, and Uriah—the innocent,
 the

the injured, the valiant Uriah—fell. Ver.
16, 17.

‘ It is absurd, (says an ingenious writer,)
‘ it is almost impossible to suppose that little
‘ things should not lead to greater: you may
‘ as well go stand upon the beach, and bid the
‘ main flood bate its usual height; you may
‘ speak peace to the tempestuous ocean with
‘ as much effect as attempt to stop the career
‘ of impetuous passion; as to say to the flood
‘ of evil communications and habits, “ Hi-
“ therto shalt thou come, and no further.”

David is a striking example of this; he indulged unlawful inclinations, he sought out the object which excited them, he committed adultery, and then, because he could no other way conceal his crime, he added to it, the still more horrid act of *murder*!—Oh! what is man! David, brethren, is not the only example we have, no, not by many, of the same, or very similar instances of human depravity. One sin too frequently leads man on to another, and lays him, in some instances, under a kind of fatal necessity to fill up the measure of his iniquity. Of the many of our unhappy fellow-creatures who are condemned by the laws of the country to suffer death as an example

example to others, there is scarce one (not one, I might venture to say,) but would bear testimony in favour of this truth, that one sin leads on to another, greater and more unpardonable. Beware, then, (I speak here to all, but particularly to the younger part of this auditory)—beware how you indulge corruption. Be fervent in prayer. Beware of improper company; “ Evil communications (says an Apostle) corrupt good manners;” and nothing is more possible, than that they who indulge themselves in one sin, may be hardened and led on to commit all sins. Besides, with respect to those who habitually indulge themselves in sin, it is not without something like a miracle that the best of advice takes effect upon them; even the word of God, which is said to be “ quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword,” after a long course of iniquity loses all its natural efficacy upon their consciences: and you cannot but know, brethren, what will be the fate of such incorrigible offenders, what will become of them who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—“ they shall be punished (says the Apostle, 2 Theff. i. 9.) with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

But

But to pursue the account before us. When Uriah had been thus basely murdered, his faithless Bathsheba (it seems merely to keep up appearances) mourned, according to the custom of those days. "And when the mourning was past, we read, David (the fallen David) sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son," Ver. 26, 27. Hence it appears, that David continued for some time in his impenitency, and this notwithstanding his frequent attendance upon the ordinances of God. Can there be a greater instance of the corruption of human nature, or of the deceitfulness of sin? it proves, what I just asserted, that even the word of God, without something like a miracle, makes no impression on those who indulge themselves in sin. And let this lead us all to examine ourselves. If we are secretly indulging the corruption of our hearts, in vain do we pretend to worship the living and true God.—"To this man," saith the Almighty, by the prophet Isaiah, chap. lxvi. 2.—"to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." The hardened, impenitent sinner, therefore, cannot expect a blessing from God

in

in his approaches to him in religious duties: Oh, then, how dreadful must it be to live and die in such a state as this! My brethren, if you have any love to your immortal souls, which in the twinkling of an eye may be required at your hands, and yet openly or secretly are living in any course of wickedness, be persuaded to determine, through the grace of God, immediately to put away from you the accursed thing, and while there is mercy for those who seek it, repent and live. Jesus hath obtained pardon for every repenting sinner who comes unto God by him; but the finally impenitent must inevitably be lost, since, according to the Apostle, Heb. x. 26, 27. "there remaineth (to such) no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation."

We read in the last verse of the chapter, that "the thing which David had done displeased the Lord." All sin is displeasing to Him "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," even what men call the *smallest* sin; but such abominations as David committed are peculiarly displeasing to God, and especially when committed by those from whom

whom better things might reasonably be expected—"the thing that David had done" (saith the sacred historian) displeased the "Lord."

Thus I have noticed the account we have of David's fall; and surely it will dispose every disciple of Christ in this assembly to attend to the advice which has on this and former occasions been offered, and to entertain proper ideas of his own weakness and frailty. Behold now a rich display of the Lord's mercy! He will not suffer the sinner to go on without remonstrance; and when so hardened that ordinary means fail, a particular method shall be taken to arouse his guilty conscience. David therefore is not suffered to continue in sin without a special admonition from God. A prophet is sent to him, and a parable is put into his mouth to awaken the unhappy monarch to a sense of his crimes, and to make him seek for mercy.—"The Lord (says the sacred historian in the beginning of the 12th chapter)—the Lord sent Nathan unto David, and he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor.

"The

“ The rich man had exceeding many flocks
“ and herds : But the poor man had nothing
“ save one little ewe lamb, which he had
“ bought and nourished up : and it grew up
“ together with him, and with his children ;
“ it did eat of his own meat, and drank of
“ his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and
“ was unto him as a daughter. And there
“ came a traveller unto the rich man, and he
“ spared to take of his own flock and of his
“ own herd to dress for the wayfaring man
“ that was come unto him, but took the
“ poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the
“ man that was come unto him.” Ver. 1—4.

This was the parable with which Nathan was sent, and you perceive he so managed the relation as though it had been a real thing, and demands the king's justice in the case proposed. David no sooner heard the relation, than, as we read in the 5th and 6th verses, “ his anger was greatly kindled against
“ the man ; and he said to Nathan, As the
“ Lord liveth, the man that hath done this
“ thing shall surely die : And he shall restore
“ the lamb fourfold, because he did this
“ thing, and because he had no pity.”

How

How severe was David against the crimes of another man, (as he thought,) how quiet and unconcerned at his own; nay, how blind and stupid! This, alas! is a very common case; we behold the mote in our brother's eye, but consider not the beam in our own eye. And this is peculiarly evidenced by the remarks which men often make after they have heard a sermon, in which the preacher has been plainly protesting against the various sins which are committed, and shewing the awful consequences of them when unrepented of. How common, on such occasions, is the observation, that this, or that, or the other, part of the discourse exactly suited such and such a person, and that if they do not attend to it, they must be blind indeed; all the while that a man's own self is generally overlooked, and, through the deceitfulness of his heart, the most flagrant sins are often altogether unnoticed by him.—“David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:” to which Nathan replies, in the words of our text, “Thou art the Man!”—Can we suppose the confusion David must have been in when

when the prophet made this application, this unexpected application of the parable, and when he thus condemned the offending king out of his own mouth, "Thou art the Man!" It does not appear that the prophet gave him opportunity to answer till he had fully stated the whole matter to him, shewn him the great anger of the Lord against him, and informed him of his impending punishment. David was then pierced to his very soul, and, no doubt, with the tears of penitence flowing from his eyes, he exclaimed, ver. 13. "I have sinned against the Lord!" And how genuine and sincere his repentance was, we may learn from the psalm which he composed when the prophet left him, and which he caused to be set to music and sung publicly in the temple worship. I allude to the fifty-first Psalm, which I would earnestly recommend to your perusal when you depart from the present ordinance.

"David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord." Happy for him that he was brought to this sense of his crimes! Had it not been thus, had he lived and died in a state of stupidity and false security, (if such a man as David could live and die in that

that state,) there is no doubt but he must have perished for ever! Let the daring offender think of this, and while there is mercy, while there is hope, while there is a promise to plead, let him "acknowledge his transgression, and be sorry for his sin." No one was ever rejected, who, from a contrite heart, cried out in time, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" no one, we may venture to affirm, ever will be rejected, who thus approaches the throne of grace. "Are not God's ways equal," then, but "are not mens' ways unequal?—Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord? As I live I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." Such are the solemn declarations of God by the prophet Ezekiel. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, (says the Apostle to the Philippians, chap. ii. 12, 13.) for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure."

Awakened out of the sleep of sin, and brought by divine grace to the exercise of
G repentance,

repentance, the prophet proclaims to the royal penitent the mercy of God. "And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." Ver. 13, 14.

God, I have said, pardoneth the iniquity of those, who, sensible of their crimes, implore his mercy through a Redeemer's merits. Here is a striking instance of it. Neither *adultery*, nor even *murder* itself, though connected with it, are too great sins for him to blot out. I speak not this (I trust you can bear me witness from the general strain of my preaching)—I speak not this to encourage any in sin, but to shew the mercy of our God, in his dear Son, towards the truly penitent, and to encourage sinners of all descriptions to "turn and live."

But though God pardoneth the iniquities of the *truly* penitent; though he receiveth the returning prodigal with open arms; though, according to the strong and expressive language

guage of the 89th Psalm, "he will not break his covenant, nor alter the thing which has gone out of his lips; though his loving-kindness he will not utterly take from his offending people, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail; yet he will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes;" and that not only for their own benefit, but publicly to shew his displeasure against sin, and to stop the mouths of them that blaspheme. This also is evidenced in God's conduct towards David, whose child (which indeed was the fruit of his wickedness) he took from among the living; and this, in a variety of respects, hath been his conduct towards many, who, after a long profession of religion, have unhappily erred from the ways of righteousness. As there is no man, then, as there is no Christian, however eminent in grace, that is not liable to fall in an hour of temptation, when he relaxes in the devout exercises of prayer and watchfulness; so there is no Christian who will not, by yielding to temptation, bring himself under the chastising hand of God: and yet on his repentance and application for mercy he may obtain it; and

G 2

“if God's wrath be kindled but a little;”
 (these are the words of David at the close of
 the second Psalm, and it appears from what
 we have heard concerning him that he wrote
 feelingly on the subject,)—“if God's wrath
 “be kindled but a little, blessed are all they
 “that put their trust in him.”

“The Lord hath put away thy sin (says
 “the prophet to David); thou shalt not die.
 “Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast
 “given great occasion to the enemies of the
 “Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born
 “unto thee shall surely die.” Indeed, nothing
 does so much hurt to religion as immorality
 of conduct among its professors. The people
 of the world will not discriminate; the sins of
 one professor are charged upon the whole body,
 nay, upon religion itself; “by this deed (says
 “Nathan to David) thou hast given great
 “occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blas-
 “pheme.” And, brethren, so long as the
 world stands, this blot in David's character
 will be in the mouths of the profane, as an
 excuse for their wickedness, and as an argu-
 ment against religion. But notwithstanding
 the subtilty of the devil in thus attempting to
 do

do away every thing that is great and good, *Religion*, true *Religion*, will abide and gain ground. And notwithstanding this blot on David's character is perpetually taken notice of by the wicked, and made an objection against religion, we fear not to meet the infidel on this ground, and are ready to prove to him, that it was not David's religion which caused him so to sin, but the *want* of religion at that period; and that he deeply lamented his fall, instead of glorying in his shame, as they are apt to do who find themselves disposed to follow him in his sin, though not in his repentance. Besides, brethren, (I speak here particularly to the enemies of revelation,) besides, it is *one* among the many incontestible proofs of the truth of the Bible, therefore *one* among the many arguments which should prevail with men to attend to it, that the faults and miscarriages of those whose characters are delineated in the Scriptures, as believers in divine revelation, are not concealed or palliated; and *one* reason among the many (I here speak to you who revere revelation, and who are the professed servants of the Most High)—*one* among the many reasons why this fault of David is handed down, is not

only to shew you the corruption of human nature, and the deceitfulness of sin, but to guard you against giving "occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," by any immorality on your part: yes, my dear brethren, this is not handed down to fix an indelible disgrace on the character of David; but, as the Apostle observes in the case of the rebellious Israelites, 1 Cor. x. 6, 11. for an example to you, "to the intent that you should not lust after evil things; and it is written for your admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

I close the history with the words of St. Paul with which I opened the subject, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" and with the admonition of our Lord, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."

And now, brethren, as my text, like most texts of historical sermons treated in this practical manner, has been little more than a motto to my subject, permit me, with a view of your retaining the important truths which have been set before you, and of calling

ing

ing forth your attention to the other truths of religion,—permit me, I say, to observe to you, that the words, “Thou art the man,” may well be the application of every sermon to every hearer.—“Thou art the man” to whom these things have been spoken!—“Thou art the man,” who, though not an adulterer, or a murderer, art nevertheless a sinner before God!—“Thou art the man” who cannot be saved but by God’s mercy in the Son of his love!—“Thou art the man” who should seek this mercy whilst it is time!—“Thou art the man,” who, when humbled under a sense of sin, wilt receive pardon!—“Thou art the man” to whose prayers God’s ears are opened!—“Thou art the man” who should watch and pray lest thou entereſt into temptation!—“Thou art the man” for whose admonition all is written!—“Thou art the man” who should take heed to the things which thou haſt heard, leſt at any time thou ſhouldeſt “let them ſlip,” and the conſequence prove thine eternal ruin!—“Thou art the man!” Oh! my brethren, when this application is made not only by the preacher, but by the hearer to his own ſoul, what great advantages reſult from the miniſtration of

God's word ! This leads men not to be satisfied that they have heard a sermon with their outward ears, but ardently to pray that what they have heard may, by divine grace, be grafted inwardly in their hearts. This leads them to pray that they may receive the Gospel in the love and in the power of it, so as to be enabled "to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things:" and it was a good observation of an old divine, that 'praying would either make a man leave off sinning, or that sinning would make him leave off praying.' So that the whole benefit of a sermon, under God, rests on prayer; and we may venture to assert, that no *lasting*, no *real* advantage will accrue to any hearer of the word who does not honestly apply what has been said to his own soul, and pray in secret for the divine blessing to accompany the public ordinances.

May none of you then depart from the house of God without the most determined purposes of looking up to him for his blessing on that which hath been now spoken. "Jesus (we are assured) ever liveth to make intercession for us:"—through Him every petition

tion will reach the highest heaven ;—through Him it is promised, Isa. xl. 31. “ They that
“ wait upon the Lord shall renew their
“ strength ; they shall mount up with wings
“ as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary ;
“ and they shall walk, and not faint.”

tion will reach the highest heaven;—through
that it is promised, Isa. xl. 31. "They shall
wait upon the Lord, shall renew their
strength; they shall mount up with wings
as eagles; they shall run and not be weary;
and they shall walk, and not faint."

SERMON V.

THE

RESURRECTION' TO LIFE AND
TO CONDEMNATION.

FROM ST. JOHN V. 28, 29.

SERMON V.

RESURRECTION TO LIFE AND
TO CONDEMNATION.

FROM ST. JOHN V. 28-29

ST. JOHN v. 28, 29.

The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

OUR blessed Lord had just given a most illustrious proof of his divinity, in healing, by the side of Bethesda's pool, a poor man who had been grievously afflicted thirty and eight years. This surprizing miracle, which was not to be contradicted, being wrought openly, and in the face of his most malignant enemies, mightily enraged the Jews, who, as it is said in the 16th and 18th verses of the chapter, persecuted Jesus, and sought the more to kill him, not only because he had broken the sabbath, as they supposed, (for it was on the sabbath-day that he said to the impotent man, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk,") but because he had taken occasion plainly to speak of the divinity of his person,

as

as the co-equal, co-eternal Son of God. The anger and envy of the Jews, on this occasion, gave rise to a very long discourse, which Jesus condescended to make, and from which the present text is selected. He began with assuring the unbelieving multitude, that he did the same works as his Father, and nothing contrary to his Father's will; and that it was in *his* power not only to raise an impotent man from a bed of pain and sickness, but to raise and quicken the very dead. He presently after tells them that they should soon be witnesses of such his power; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, (ver. 25.) The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." Our Lord here primarily alluded to the resurrection of Lazarus from the grave, the raising of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, the restoration of the widow's son, and other such miracles which he wrought in their presence; and it is probable he also alluded to that spiritual resurrection, of which his followers are made partakers. Brethren, we are all by nature "dead in trespasses and sins;" and when we are brought to listen to the voice of the Son of
of

of God in his Gospel, we are said to be quickened and made alive. Jesus having said this, bids them not to wonder, not to be amazed, that such was his almighty power; and proceeds to inform them, that the time was hastening on, when not only a few individual persons, but all who sleep in their graves should be raised from death to life by his powerful word, and that to live for evermore, some in happiness, others in misery: “Marvel not at this,” says he, ver. 28, 29. do not be surprized at what I tell you of the resurrection of a *few*—“Marvel not at this; “for the hour is coming, in the which *all* “that are in the graves shall hear his voice, “and shall come forth, they that have done “good, unto the resurrection of life; and “they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

In these words, brethren, some of the most grand and important truths are contained that can possibly be offered to the consideration of man; and as they are on the subject of our own resurrection at the last day, I hope that God will bless them to the great purposes for which

which we are now assembled in his sacred presence.

The first truth which is contained in our text is this—That the august period of the general resurrection is drawing on—"The hour "is coming," saith Jesus, speaking of that time.

I know of nothing to which mankind are more universally inclined than anticipation: any event that is expected at ever so distant a period, any circumstance that is to take place, though the matter be such as doth not particularly or personally concern us, is for ever upon our remembrance; we think and we talk of what is to be done, and even of what may happen in years to come, though we cannot be ignorant but long before the circumstances occur we may be as indifferent to all the plans and changes of the world as the dust beneath our feet; and yet, strange to say! we live (at least many of us do) unmindful of that hastening period when we shall all be raised from death to life!—I say, of that *hastening* period, because if Jesus said,
near

near two thousand years ago, "The hour is coming," with what an emphasis must the words be *now* repeated. Brethren, as St. Paul said to the Athenians, Acts xvii. 31. "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." That day is nearer every breath we draw; and when it will dawn upon the world, is only known to that God who hath appointed it. We ought ever, therefore, to live in expectation of it. And, let me ask you, what can be more and better calculated to promote that holiness and circumspection which Christians are enjoined, and without which no man will see the Lord, than the continual expectance of the general resurrection? Did men seriously think that the time of the general resurrection was at hand, that it may surprize the world in a moment, they would fear to indulge themselves in those crimes and vanities, against which eternal death is threatened: and did christian men, the sincere disciples of Jesus, keep the general resurrection more upon their minds, it would check many improprieties

of conduct, and lead them to demean themselves at all times more like Christians; it would prevent them from adopting the maxims of a foolish world, and make them live more like strangers and pilgrims here. We all carry about with us a body of sin and death; we are daily and hourly exposed to temptations; nothing but the grace of God can keep us from falling into the worst of sins: Oh, then, let us seek *that* grace with the avidity of those who are continually mindful of the august period of the general resurrection!

The second truth contained in the text is this—That when the hour or time of the general resurrection comes, “all that are in the “ graves” shall be raised, “shall come forth.” —“All that are in the *graves* ;” that is, all that are in the *places* of the dead; for so the word *graves* here signifies according to the observations of expositors. Indeed it is clear from reason as well as from revelation, that on the morning of the resurrection the sea will give up the dead which are in it as well as the earth.—“The hour is coming (says “Jesus) when all that are in the graves” shall
be

be raised. I wish here to remind you, that no one individual of Adam's race will be missing at the great resurrection. Nor is it any argument against this awful fact, that some characters will not have gone down to the grave when the resurrection shall take place: by no means; for such, we are told, will be *changed* in that hour; will undergo an instantaneous alteration, as though they had been long deposited in the tomb. And we learn, that as many of them as really belong to Jesus Christ will join the company of risen believers. St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, towards the end of the fourth chapter, writes thus; "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." And it is evident from other passages of holy writ, and were it not, reason itself would establish the fact, that while *living* saints join the company of *risen* saints, *living* sinners will join the company of *risen* sinners.

Yes, brethren, when the hour or time of the great resurrection comes, all the sons and daughters of Adam will be convened in one grand assembly. This is the truth declared by the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. ver. 10, former part, where he says, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." This also is the truth established by the vision of St. John, who "saw the dead, small and great," stand at the tribunal of heaven, Rev. xx. 12.—What numbers of dead bodies lie in the graves in and about this metropolis! *we*, if the resurrection morning does not dawn upon us, in the course of a very few years shall help to increase the funeral piles, and to fill the earth! and, let us seriously meditate on the truth, we shall *all* be raised up!—"The hour is coming (saith Jesus) when all that are in the graves shall come forth." We shall not lie in our graves for ever:—death is a sleep, but not an eternal sleep: happy would it be for some if it were so, but it is not; *all* that are now in their graves, all that shall be lain there, "shall come forth."

The third truth contained in the text is this—That "*all* that are in the graves," that
is,

is, all who shall be lain in the graves before the day of the general resurrection, "shall come forth" on hearing the voice of Jesus; "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth." After the way in which he raised the dead, the stone was lifted up which contained Jesus had just before said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." And it is observed, that those few persons whom He raised from death to life, during his abode on earth, were raised by his voice, by his word; he spake or called to them, and the dead heard his voice, and became alive. The daughter of the ruler of the synagogue was raised to life by Jesu's voice: we read, "He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise: and straightway the damsel arose and walked," Mark v. 41, 42.—The widow's son was raised in the same manner. After graciously speaking to the disconsolate mother, who was following her dearly beloved child to the tomb, our Lord touched the bier on which the corpse was carried, and when the bearers stopped, he addressed him-

self to the lifeless youth, and said; "Young
 man, I say unto thee, arise:" we read,
 "And he that was dead sat up, and began
 to speak; and he delivered him to his mo-
 ther," Luke viii. 14, 15. — And just to no-
 tice the way in which he raised up Lazarus.
 After the stone was lifted up which confined
 him in the tomb, Jesus called out to him with
 a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" it is
 written, "And he that was dead came forth,
 bound hand and foot with grave clothes,"
 John xii. 43, 44. Those persons were truly
 dead, but dead as they were, they all heard
 the life-giving voice of Jesus, and arose. So,
 brethren, will all the entombed children of
 Adam hear his voice on the resurrection morn;
 he will call to us by his angel, who shall sound
 his trumpet, and every one of us, yea Adam
 himself, our first father, and all who have
 long since mouldered into dust, will come
 forth, will come forth as perfect men as any
 that are now within these walls. And, to
 address the unbelieving (if any such are here)
 in the words of St. Paul to king Agrippa,
 Acts xxvi. 8. "Why should it be thought
 a thing incredible with you that God should
 raise the dead?" Surely, that omnipotent
 Being,

Being, who at the first called us into existence, and created us of nothing, can re-create us after we have sunk into our original nothingness! Let those instances of divine power which Jesus exerted in the days of his flesh, serve to establish and strengthen our faith in this particular, and help us to repeat heartily this article of our Creed, 'I believe in the resurrection of the body.'

The fourth truth contained in the text (indeed expressly declared) is this—That when all the children of Adam shall come forth from their graves at the voice of Jesus, "they that have done good" shall come forth "unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

They whom Jesus raised when he dwelt upon earth, the dead who then heard his voice and lived, only lived for a few more fleeting years, and at length returned again to death; but the dead who shall by-and-by hear his voice will live to die no more, "death will have no more dominion over them." But let us now attend to the different conditions to

which the different characters will be raised;
 "They that have done good shall come forth
 "unto the resurrection of life; and they that
 "have done evil shall come forth unto the
 "resurrection of damnation." How conso-
 nant with this declaration is that part of one
 of our Creeds, where we assert, "At whose
 'coming (meaning the second coming of the
 ' Lord Jesus) all men shall rise again with
 ' their bodies, and shall give account for their
 ' own works, and they that have done good
 ' shall go into life everlasting, and they that
 ' have done evil into everlasting fire.' How
 agreeable also with our Lord's description of
 his second coming, and the order of the final
 judgment, on record in the fifth chapter of
 the Gospel by St. Matthew, which ends thus:
 "And these (meaning the wicked) shall go
 "away into everlasting punishment, but the
 "righteous into life eternal."

Let us dwell a few moments on each of
 these particulars.—"They that have done
 "good shall come forth unto the resurrection
 "of life;" that is, of *eternal life*; for, here,
eternal life is put for happiness, *eternal happi-
 ness*. And none but they that shall have done
 good

good will come forth unto the resurrection of life in this sense—"They that have done good" (says Christ) unto the resurrection of life."
—"They that have done good?" Methinks you are ready to reply to this, in the words of some of old, on another occasion, "Who then can be saved?" for it is written, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." But, brethren, you are to remember, that all such expressions as these are to be understood descriptively, and not literally. "They that have done good;" that is, not they who have invariably done good, from the beginning to the end of their lives; but they, who, since they made a profession of belonging to Jesus, have evinced the sincerity of their profession by a life of holiness; by shewing that they have delighted in the law of God after the inward man; and have, through divine grace, lived righteously in the world. No, thanks to a gracious God! though we shall be judged "according to our works;" that is, though our works will be brought in as evidences for or against us, and evince the reality or falsity of our religious profession; yet we shall not be judged by our works; that is, not be rewarded according to our deservings; the best man

man living would not, in that case, have a single hope of happiness; it is by the righteousness of a Redeemer, that we can alone be accounted righteous. This Scripture, therefore, "they that have done good" shall come forth "unto the resurrection of life," is to shew us, that the *sincere* disciples of Jesus delight in *good*, in *goodness*; and that none but such will enter into life eternal.—This is a day when many make a great profession, but, alas! do all follow that which is good in their daily conduct? Oh let none of us deceive ourselves with a name! "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity," will be the language of our Judge to the insincere. Jesus went about this world *doing good*; and they who live in this world, and delight not in *doing good*, but continually do evil, do not belong to him, and cannot hope, without conversion, to come forth by-and-by "unto the resurrection of life:" but they who delight in *doing good*; they who give so satisfactory and so pleasing an evidence that they belong to Jesus, may receive all the comfort of the sweet assurance here given to his faithful followers.

It is not by our works, but by the righteousness of our Redeemer, that we are saved. It is not by our profession, but by our daily conduct, that we are judged. It is not by our name, but by our deeds, that we are known.

It now remains that I dwell a moment on the other gloomy particular. And here, I pray you, lend all the attention of your minds; and hence be persuaded, as many of you as are conscious that you are living in sin, to seek after a new and spiritual life. They that have done evil," says Christ, shall come forth "unto the resurrection of damnation."—"They that have done evil;" that is, they who have lived habitually in sin; they who have given this sad evidence, that they do not belong to Jesus—they shall come forth unto the resurrection of damnation. Oh! what a miserable resurrection! How preferable to lay for ever in the sleeping grave! *Damnation!* It is a dreadful word indeed! The very thought of what it imports makes our blood run cold; what must it be to endure the miseries of it? What must it be to know and feel the full execution of the sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" May God forbid that any individual of us should be so inexpressibly wretched! but never, never, let us forget, that *some* will come forth from their graves, at the voice of the Son of God, "unto the resurrection of
dam-

"to damnation!"—Never, never, let us forget, that it will be those *who do evil*; those who delight in sin.—Never, never, let us forget, that if sin is our delight, we have cause to fear all that is to be feared: "They that have *done good*," shall come forth "unto the resurrection of life; and they that have *done evil*, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Now, brethren, this sermon calls for no other application, than that which I hope the Lord will give it, by his Spirit, to your hearts; so that having exemplified the truths contained in the text, I have only to entreat that you seriously think of the words which have been spoken, than which I know not that any thing will better prepare you for your graves, whither we are all hastening, and from whence the voice of Jesus will one day call us all to live to die no more—will one day call us into a happy or a miserable resurrection. If there be any thing deserving of thought—*think of these things.*

+

SERMON VI.

ON

SOUL PROSPERITY.

FROM 3 ST. JOHN, VER. 2.

SERMON VI.

SOUL PROSPERITY.

FROM 3RD JOHN, VER. 2.

3 St. JOHN, ver. 2.

*Beloved, I wish above all things that thou
mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy
soul prospereth.*

NOT only the general but the particular
epistles of the Apostles are of great uti-
lity to the church of Christ, and to the world
at large; and for this purpose, and indeed on
this account, did they obtain a place in the
sacred canon. The short epistle now before
us, written by St. John to an eminent Chris-
tian, named Gaius, must give occasion to every
attentive reader for many edifying remarks,
and thereby be as productive of good as a ge-
neral epistle, or as one immediately directed
to us. The verse selected, and just read,
cannot, I think, but lead us to the following
remarks.

1st, That it is the character of a good man
to wish well unto others.

2dly,

2dly, That health and prosperity are blessings much to be desired.

3dly, That there is such a thing as Soul Prosperity. And,

4thly, That this *prosperity* should be the object of our greatest care, and the perpetual subject of our petitions at a throne of grace.

May the Spirit of God, who guided the pen of the Apostle, powerfully impress these sentiments on all your hearts!—"Beloved," saith the Apostle to his friend and fellow-christian Gaius, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

We may hence remark, in the first place, That it is the character of a good man to wish well unto others.

The inspired author of these epistles, was he who is dignified in the New Testament with that high appellation of "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He appears to have been admitted to a peculiar place in his Lord's esteem,

esteem; and the whole of his writings evidently shew, that while his Saviour very dearly loved him, his heart was full of affection towards his divine Lord, towards his fellow-christians, and indeed towards all mankind. In his first epistle, chap. iii. 11, 12, he writes thus: "This is the message that ye heard
 " from the beginning, That we should love
 " one another: Not as Cain, who was of
 " that wicked one, and slew his brother." And again, ver. 18. "My little children, let
 " us not love in word, neither in tongue;
 " but in deed, and in truth." And, in the epistle before us, he addresses his friend three times by the title *Beloved*; whilst, in our text, he expresses the tender concern he felt both for his spiritual and temporal welfare—"Be-
 " loved, (says he,) I wish above all things," or I sincerely wish, "that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul
 " prospereth." The margin of some of our Bibles substitutes the word *prayer* instead of *wish*; "I pray that thou mayest prosper," &c. And surely, brethren, we cannot properly be said to wish well to one another unless we pray for one another, as the Apostle doubtless did for his beloved Gaius, and as all do who are of

the Apostle's spirit. Yes, the true Christian prays for his brethren, not only his brethren in Christ, but for his brethren according to the flesh, for all mankind, even his enemies, agreeable to the express direction of his divine Master, Matt. v. 44. "Love your enemies, " bless them that curse you, do good to them " that hate you, and pray for those which " despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Brethren, do you thus wish well unto others? Do you feel a pleasure on hearing of a neighbour's success in life? Does it rejoice your heart that a notorious sinner has become a serious, religious man? Do you, in short, make the temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare of all your fellow-creatures a part of your prayers? This is characteristic of the true Christian. If, therefore, you live in envy, hatred, and malice, and wish evil to your brethren, it is a presumptive evidence that you are Christians but in name. Far is it from me to think thus unfavourably of the constant hearers of God's word; and my prayer is, that you may abound in love more and more, and cherish the disposition so distinguishingly

tinguishingly possessed by St. John, the disciple whom Jesus particularly loved !

Our second remark is,—That health and prosperity are blessings much to be desired. This is sufficiently evident from the wish or prayer of the Apostle for his friend, “ I wish
“ above all things ;” that is, as before explained, I sincerely pray ; or, as an ingenious commentator paraphrases,—I pray, that, in every respect, “ thou mayest prosper and be
“ in health.”

With respect to *health* ; without it what is life, and every comfort which man can enjoy ? It is no uncommon thing to hear characters of all descriptions wishing for dissolution after long sickness ; yes, the man most wedded to the world, who has no solid ground to hope for happiness in the life to come, wishes to depart when he has lain for any period on a bed of agony and pain. Such a blessing is health. A gracious continuance of health brings a man to a state of venerable old age. I say, *venerable* ; for old age is venerable. It is written of Abraham, the father of the faithful, Gen. xxv. 8. that “ he died in a good

“ *old age* ;” whereby we cannot but learn that old age is venerable. It was indeed amongst those antient commands, which far from being abrogated, are now enforced from motives stronger than before, Levit. xix. 32. “ Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man :” and it is the declaration of Solomon, Prov. xvi. 31. “ The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.” What fight so truly noble as that of an old man who fears the Lord ! On the contrary, indeed, no fight is so affecting as that of a man grown grey in the service of Satan. This does not, however, invalidate the blessing of health ; it rather augments it ; and, among other reasons, it may be assigned, that the longer health is continued, the more time is given wherein we may successfully seek the Lord.

With respect to *prosperity*, or success in life, that is coveted by every one. There is something interwoven in our very nature which makes us desirous of prosperity. To prosper in the world, “ men rise up early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness.” Invention is perpetually on the

the rack, and no opportunity neglected, to promote our temporal interests. Indeed, but for the desire to prosper in the world, and to ward off the miseries of poverty, there would be an end of industry, and in a little time the wealthiest of the sons of men would not be able to procure the common conveniences, and even the necessaries of life, for which they are obliged, under God, to the diligence of others. If we turn over the sacred pages, we shall find that prosperity in the world is among the blessings which God has promised to them that fear him. To pass by many other Scriptures, only look into the 28th of Deuteronomy, ver. 1, 3, 4, 8. It is written, “ If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the
“ voice of the Lord thy God, blessed shalt
“ thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou
“ be in the field; blessed shall be the fruit of
“ thy body, and the fruit of thy ground,
“ and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of
“ thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.
“ The Lord shall command the blessing upon
“ thee in thy store-houses, and in all that
“ thou settest thine hand unto.” True indeed it is, that some prosper in the world, and have riches in possession, who are the

enemies of God by wicked works; and, on the other hand, that some of God's sincere servants are brought into the depths of poverty. But it must be remembered that such providences are permitted, or rather ordered, by a wise and gracious God for the punishment of his enemies, and the welfare of his friends. The table of the wicked is often made a *snare* to them; and *the things*, that is, the *prosperity*, which should have been for their *wealth*, that is, their *comfort*, often become to them an occasion of *falling*, in the worst of senses. And it is no less frequent, that God, in order to promote his own glory, and to prove to themselves and to manifest to others the fidelity of his people, tries them in the way he tried his servant Job. As, therefore, the abuse of health, by some, does not lessen the blessing of health in itself; so, brethren, the prosperity of some wicked men, and the adversity to which some good men are brought, do not lessen the blessing of prosperity. But then, while we naturally desire prosperity and health to attend ourselves, like the Apostle let us *wish* and pray for these blessings in behalf of others; "Beloved, " I wish

“ I wish above all things that thou mayest
“ prosper and be in health.”

The third remark to which the words of the text lead, is this,—That there is such a thing as *Soul Prosperity*.—“ Beloved, I wish
“ above all things that thou mayest prosper
“ and be in health, even as thy soul prof-
“ pereth.”

Are any ready to ask, What is Soul Prosperity? I would answer by another question, namely, What is bodily and temporal prosperity? What is it to prosper in the world, and be in health? As to prosper in the world, and be in health, is, in every respect, to be doing well as to the present life; Soul Prosperity has a regard to our welfare as to the life to come. To prosper in our soul, therefore, is to be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to be living daily more and more in a fitness for the kingdom of heaven. Happy is that man who experimentally knows what it is to prosper in his soul! Such a happy man was Gaius, to whom the Apostle addressed the epistle before us. My friends and brethren,

thren, are you possessed of this happiness? As St. John wished his friend worldly prosperity and health, I most sincerely wish you the same. I can truly say to each one of you, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health;"—may I add to each one of you, "even as thy soul prospereth?"—even as religion grows and flourishes in thy heart? I doubt not but many present are happy as Gaius was; so happy as to be the true, sincere followers of the Lord Jesus Christ; so happy as to be growing in grace, while increasing in days; so happy as to be getting richer and richer in spiritual treasures. I congratulate such on their happiness; an happiness, with which nothing else that is usually called by that name is worthy of being compared. But, alas! would it not be wishing some of you, all that is termed misfortune; would it not be wishing some of you the worst of poverty, and the sickliest state of body, to say, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth?" Oh suffer the words of truth to sink deep into your hearts! Is it not a certain though a lamentable fact, that in-
stead

stead of prospering in your souls, some of you are declining within? that you are not now so religious, and in so fit a state to die, as you were in years that are past? Is it not a lamentable fact, that each morning finds you more and more indifferent as to the concerns of futurity? Has not *custom*, that second nature, added to the care which you have taken to still the voice of conscience, hardened your hearts against those arguments which once had weight with you, and learnt you to follow the sinful ways of the world with boldness and eagerness? Are you not ready, lest you should again be made to tremble, to say to the ministers of God with some of old, Isa. xxx. 10. "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits?" But far be this detestable conduct from us! Know, then, my brethren, that those of you who are not prospering in your souls must be declining, because religion can never be at a stand within: therefore, those of you who are not prospering in your souls, who are not growing in grace, are in a most awful condition every breath you draw; and dying destitute of *real* religion, death eternal is threatened!—I say,

that dying destitute of *real* religion, death eternal is threatened ! By *death eternal* is meant *everlasting misery*, that misery which follows on dissolution. And how know you, (I speak to you who have little or no religion,)—how know you, but while you are crying peace and safety, sudden destruction may come upon you ? ‘ In the midst of life we are in death : ’ and, oh ! think how wretched it is to die destitute of vital godliness ! and whilst there is mercy, pardon, and plenteous redemption, and whilst you may live unto God, and prosper in your souls, think of the things that make for your peace !

Here I may seasonably call your attention to the fourth, which shall be the last remark, which is,—That Soul Prosperity should be the object of our greatest care, and the perpetual subject of our petitions at a throne of grace.

The justness of this remark must be, and is, I presume, allowed by all. What is prosperity in the world when compared with Soul Prosperity ? And yet, while all means are used for worldly prosperity, Soul Prosperity
is

is regarded but by a few. To actuate those to seek after it, who hitherto have cared for nothing beyond their temporal interests, I have already mentioned the awfulness and danger of their state; what more, therefore, shall I here say to such?—Let me then particularly address myself to you whose souls are prospering; to you who are really growing in grace, while you are increasing in days. And, from our present remark, ‘That Soul Prosperity should be the object of our greatest care, and the perpetual subject of our petitions at a throne of grace,’ let me appeal to you for the truth, that nothing but the greatest care and the most earnest supplications will promote Soul Prosperity.

Brethren, it is vain to hope for Soul Prosperity, while we live according to the corrupt maxims of the world. We must turn our backs upon the world, and take up our cross, and deny ourselves, not only the gratification of our sinful appetites, but the inordinate indulgence of things in themselves lawful, or we shall not find the business of religion to go on well. They prosper most in their souls, who are most careful to keep themselves out
of

of the way of evil; and the most eminent Christian is in danger of being entangled in the pollutions of the world, when he is unmindful of the command quoted from the Old Testament, and applied by St. Paul to the Corinthians, 2d Epist. vi. 17. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate."

And yet how many who are under some serious convictions, and seemingly desirous of Soul Prosperity, are negligent of prayer, and are found running the same giddy round as others! 'What matter of lamentation is it,'

to use the words of a late divine, 'that there are so many professing Christianity who are of so worldly a temper! Alas! alas! how much time in the world! how little with God! What eagerness in worldly, but what coldness in spiritual pursuits! How cheerfully are opportunities embraced for the world, but how are they omitted for God!'

My brethren, let no man deceive himself: God and mammon cannot be served by the same person. We cannot prosper in our souls, while we live in the spirit of the world. Religion must come to a very low ebb with us, and soon we shall be left with only the *mere name*, if we put in our lot with those who
know

know not God. To prosper in our souls, and to grow in a holy meetness for heaven, we must give all diligence in the means of grace; we must be often in our secret chambers communing with our own hearts, and supplicating divine grace. May those who have thus made Soul Prosperity the object of their care, and the subject of their petitions, continue in the good way! and may others be hence actuated and directed to imitate them!

I have thus discoursed upon the four remarks to which, as I observed in the beginning, the words of our text naturally lead. By way of improvement, or application, I would just call your meditation towards the august period, when none but the possessors of vital godliness will be welcomed to the glory of heaven; when none but those who are the real disciples of Jesus Christ will enter into his joy; and when they who now laugh at religion, and despise the professors of it, will weep and lament. There is something in the thought of that period which very much comforts the faithful Christian, and
does

does not a little alarm the inconsiderate worldling. I pray that the consideration of this may give weight to the truths which I have now delivered to you, and that thereby one and all may find it good that they have been to the house of the Lord!

Now to God the Father, &c.

SERMON VII.

ON

CAIN'S REJECTION,

AND

ABEL'S ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD.

FROM GENESIS IV. 3, 4, 5.

GENESIS iv. 3, 4, 5.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

RELIGION is no new thing; it is as old as the creation of the world. When “ God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul,” Gen. ii. 7. in order that man might know and acknowledge his dependence, and offer to God his whole services, God restricted him from tasting of a certain tree which stood in the midst of the garden of Eden. And soon after we are informed of the birth of the first man’s children, we are told, that “ in process of time,” that is, when they were

K

of

of proper age, they came before God with offerings. No doubt they were so instructed by their father, at the command of God, who afterwards gave, by his servant Moses, particular and public directions to the same conduct ;—directions, I would observe, which remained in force till the first advent of Jesus Christ, who offered up himself a sacrifice for us, and hath commanded his people, to the end of time, to be mindful of such religious exercises as we are this day engaged in. Religion, I repeat, brethren, is no new thing ; it is as old as the creation. In all ages of the world men have come before God, or been commanded to come before him, with religious services ; and from what is recorded in the passage before us concerning Cain and Abel, and their respective offerings, we may learn how to perform all our religious duties. “ Cain,” says the sacred historian, “ brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And “ Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of “ his flock, and of the fat thereof.” The text is silent as to the manner in which God testified his respect or acceptance of Abel’s offering ; but it is generally supposed, that,

in token of the divine approbation, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice. This, however, is a particular very immaterial for us to know: our concern is with the reasons (and no doubt they were sufficient ones, since the Judge of all the world cannot but do right) which caused God to have "respect unto Abel, and to his offering," whilst "unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect." There also, indeed, the sacred text is silent; but the reasons of this procedure may easily be gathered from the relation itself, and from other parts of the divine word. I purpose, brethren, by God's help, to lay these reasons before you, and, in so doing, to become the humble instrument, in his all-powerful hand, of instructing you in the right performance of this and every other religious duty.

First, I shall lay before you the reasons which caused God not to have "respect unto Cain, and to his offering."

One reason undoubtedly was, because Cain was in himself a bad man. Now to prove that Cain was a bad man, a man who had

not the fear of God before his eyes, we have only to consider what is recorded of him in the 8th verse of this chapter, where it is said, "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." And, brethren, can we contemplate the sinfulness of the first born unto Adam without lamenting the sad consequence of the fall, learning what, and how great, the depravity of human nature is. One reason, I say, why God "had not respect unto Cain, and to his offering," was, because Cain in himself was a bad man. Acquainted, as I hope you are, with the Book of God, you cannot but admit the truth delivered by Solomon, in the 15th chapter of the Book of Proverbs, ver. 8. that "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord;" that however costly a sacrifice a bad man may present, so far from procuring the Lord's acceptance, it would be offensive and hateful to him. But, as my subject requires it, I would endeavour to establish you in this awful truth by one or two scripture authorities. Turn then, brethren, to the first chapter of Isaiah's prophecy.

phcey, and read how God expostulated with his people the Jews, and upbraided their whole service of sacrifice and supplication, (a service which himself had commanded,) because they had given themselves up to iniquity, and were comparable to the sinful inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. "Hear the word of the Lord," says the Prophet, ver. 10—18. "ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and feasts, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when

“ ye make many prayers, I will not hear :
“ your hands are full of blood. Wash you,
“ make you clean : put away the evil of your
“ doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do
“ evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment,
“ relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless,
“ plead for the widow.”

This passage is so directly to the point, that it might well supersede the necessity of any other. But let me, brethren, just bring to your recollection the words of Samuel the prophet to king Saul, when the latter thought to justify an act of disobedience by an ostentatious sacrifice. You will find them in the first Book of Samuel, chap. xv. 22. “ Hath the
“ Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings
“ and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of
“ the Lord ? Behold, to obey is better than
“ sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of
“ rams.” It is as if he had said,—Though the Lord hath commanded such services, he will not accept them at the hands of the disobedient ; and when sacrifices cannot be offered but to the neglect of other and moral duties, they are absolutely sinful, and consequently unacceptable in his sight.

Now,

Now, brethren, if God had "not respect
" unto Cain, and to his offering," because
Cain was a bad man, then all our religious
duties will not find a gracious acceptance,
nor shall we find a gracious acceptance in
them, if our hearts and lives have not under-
gone a change from the evil to the good; or,
in other words, if we come under the deno-
mination of bad men, mere professors of re-
ligion, those "who draw near to God with
" their mouths, and honour him with their
" lips, whilst their hearts are far from him,"
as he complains of the Jews, Isa. xxix. 13.

Such religious exercises as we this day en-
gage in are commanded of God, but he will
most assuredly reject us, and our services, if,
like Cain, we have only the form of godli-
ness. Yes, brethren, we may sit down at
the Lord's table, and he may have no respect
unto us, may not look upon us with the fa-
vour which he beareth unto his people, but
may say to us, Who hath required this at
your hands? How came you hither without
the wedding garment. And oh! let every
meer professor of religion think within him-
self, what it must be to be rejected of God!

and what he will do in that tremendous day, when, according to the awful language of *Isaiah*, chap. xxviii. 17. "judgment will be
"laid to the line, and righteousness to the
"plummet; and the hail shall sweep away
"the refuge of lies, and the waters shall
"overflow the hiding-place."

But another reason which caused the Lord not to have "respect unto Cain, and to his
"offering," was his pride and self-righteousness. Cain depended upon the merit of his religious service! That he did so, appears from what the Apostle says, *Heb. xi. 4.* and which we shall hereafter take notice of, concerning Abel and his sacrifice, viz. that he offered it by faith; whence we may safely infer, that Cain did not, but relied for acceptance on his own act of offering, the fruit of his ground.

Strange! that such a man as Cain, a bad man, should place his dependence on any religious act, on any form of godliness! strange indeed! but so it is, brethren, that they who are the least acquainted with the religion of the heart, they whose lives have been the
most

most sinful, place, as in general they do, their hopes of acceptance with God on the merit of their religious services! How many, alas! who live in the spirit of the world, who pass six days of the week in the vanities of life, and do those things in private of which it is a shame to speak in public, think all is well, because on the sabbath they are occasionally to be seen in the courts of the Lord's house! And need I observe to you, that very irreligious men have in their last moments requested to receive the sacramental elements, and bequeathed large sums to charitable purposes, in order to purchase and insure their salvation!

I hope and trust that I am speaking to persons who have to bless God for that grace which has made them to differ from the multitude; to persons whose conduct in life is becoming their profession of the Gospel of Christ. But, brethren, even unto you, and to your religious services, God will not have respect, that is, he will not accept either you or them, if your dependence is on the merit of your services. Recollect our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and Publican, recorded
in

in the 18th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. The Pharisee, by exalting himself, by valuing himself on his offerings and services, was rejected of God; and if you read from the 7th to the 11th verse of the preceding chapter, you will see how our Lord addressed himself to his disciples on this subject. "Which of
" you," demands he, "having a servant
" plowing, or feeding cattle, will say unto
" him by and by, when he is come from the
" field, Go, and sit down to meat? And will
" not rather say unto him, Make ready where-
" with I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve
" me till I have eaten and drunken; and after-
" ward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he
" thank that servant because he did the things
" that were commanded him? I trow not.
" So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all
" those things which are commanded you,
" say, We are unprofitable servants; we have
" done that which was our duty to do,"
St. Luke xvii. 8—11. Supported by so high and unquestionable an authority as that of the Saviour of the world, let me say to you, brethren, that as the best of men are sinners at the best, mercy, and not merit—God's mercy, and not our own deserts, must be our depend.

dependence for the acceptance of our persons, and of our poor defective services.

Once more: for a third reason, as assigned by some, which caused God "not to have respect unto Cain, and to his offering," we will mention the nature or quality of the offering. 'The fruit of the ground,' say they, 'was offered unto God as Creator meerly, whereas he had made himself known as the Redeemer of his people, in promising that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent.' But as Cain was a tiller of the ground, I cannot, for my own part, suppose, that God could be displeased with the nature or quality of this offering: and though it was an offering without blood, yet the law not being then promulged, it might, through faith, have had a reference to the offering of the Messiah. However, brethren, I may take occasion hence to remark, That whilst we must not depend, for the acceptance of our persons and of our poor services, on our own merits, but on God's mercy, we are to rely upon that mercy, only in and through the Son of his love. Out of Christ God is said to be "a consuming fire," and

and a jealous God. Out of Christ God is a God of justice only; and no sinner can be accepted of the Father but in Him with whom he is always well pleased; nor can any religious services however splendid, however costly, be accepted on those accounts only. I might refer you to innumerable passages of Scripture in proof of these assertions; but I will wave them all, and just remind you of the words of our own Church in her Catechism, in the answer which is given to that important question, 'What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?—To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins; stedfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men!' My brethren, mark the words, 'A lively faith in God's mercy through Christ!' And oh that none depending on God's mercy independent of Christ, and that all who go to the Lord's table, and engaging in any religious services, would remember, that there is no reasonable hope of acceptance but on the account of that one oblation of himself which Jesus made upon the cross!

I come

I come now, in the second place, to lay before you the reasons which caused God to have "respect unto Abel, and to his offering." And here I hope to speak the language of encouragement in the name of the Lord to all those who delight in the ordinances of his appointment, and account his service perfect freedom. There were certainly two very strong reasons; one, because Abel was a good man. That Abel was a good man—that he was such, we need no further evidence than the respect which God had unto him, and to his offering. God, as we have already shewn, rejects the offerings of bad men; but the Apostle settles this point in a few words, telling us, Heb. xi. 4. that "Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." One reason, I say, which caused God to have respect unto him, and to his offering.

Brethren, in the very verse where we read that "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord," we read also, that "the prayer of the upright is his delight," Prov. xv. 8. Prayer, here, stands for the whole of religious services. But if you need further proof that

that God accepts religious services at the hands of religious men, I would only refer you to the two last verses of the 8th chapter of Genesis, which contain an account of the offering of Noah on the mountains of Ararat, when the flood ceased from off the face of the earth.

“ The Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the

“ Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse

“ the ground any more for man's sake, for the

“ imagination of man's heart is evil from his

“ youth; neither will I again smite any more

“ every living thing, as I have done. While

“ the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest,

“ and cold and heat, and summer and winter,

“ and day and night, shall not cease.”

Brethren, we have testified in this season, and in the light of this day, of God's acceptance of Noah's offering. And, brethren, the persons and the religious services of every good man will find a gracious acceptance with God. Perhaps the term *good men* depresses you, and makes you think that there is no acceptance for such poor sinners as you feel yourselves to be. But when we speak of good men, we do not mean men perfectly holy, and just, and good; but men who are sincere
in

in their religious professions, and who are endeavouring, through grace, after greater and further degrees of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Now, brethren, while you acknowledge that "there is none good," in a strict sense, "but one, that is, God;" do your consciences and conduct bear witness, that in a qualified sense, you, like Abel, are righteous and good; that is, sincere worshippers, and obedient servants of the living God? If so, then doubt not but God hath respect unto, and graciously accepts your persons and your services, and that he smells a sweet savour in all your approaches to him; that through the meritorious and all-atoning sacrifice of his well-beloved Son all your religious exercises are grateful to him. Indeed what our Church asserts in her 12th Article concerning good works in general, (which Article is strictly true and scriptural,) may be particularly asserted concerning religious exercises, that "although they cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ." Be more and more ready then, my dear brethren, to offer up your spiritual sacrifices.

Give

Give more diligence in all the ordinances and commands of God : and when you are called upon by the mercies of God to present yourselves at his table, "begin not to make excuse;" for the more true religion any man possesses, the more ready he is to perform all religious and moral duties.

The other reason which caused God to have "respect unto Abel, and to his offering," was, that Abel presented it in faith. And here it is that I directly refer you to what the Apostle says concerning him, Heb. xi. 4. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead, yet speaketh." And hence I must observe, hence it plainly appears to me, that it was not the nature or quality of the one offering which caused a rejection, nor the nature or quality of the other offering which caused an acceptance; but that faith, the faith of the offerer, comprehended the whole difference. Now, brethren, when we say that Abel made his offering by faith, we mean that he believed the promise of God; that he
was

was fully persuaded that God would fulfil it in due time; and that he depended for acceptance with God, not on the merit of his offering, but on the mercy of God, through the merit of that offering which his own so particularly typified.

Do you, my dear brethren, take pleasure in offering to God spiritual sacrifices? Are you glad when it is said, "Come, and let us go up unto the house of the Lord?" when the minister of Christ invites you to the sacramental table, and says, in the language of the king's servant, "Come, for all things are now ready?" Do your families and secret chambers testify that the more private exercises of religion are also your delight, your very meat and drink, and even dearer to you than your necessary food? And, according to the apostolic injunction, Philip. iv. 8. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," do ye also think of, and through grace practise these things? Are all these, your moral duties as well as

L

your

your religious services, laid by faith on the christian altar? and do you, like Abel, rely for acceptance on the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world? Then, like Abel, you will be accepted in the beloved. The Lord will now look upon you with "the
" favour which he beareth unto his people." Through life he will be your guide, your support, your counsel, your friend: in death he will be your strength and your comforter: and through the countless ages of eternity your glory, and your exceeding great reward.

Satan, the enemy of souls, will insinuate the contrary of all this: his servants in the world will follow the example of Cain, and hate you, and despitefully use and persecute you. Your own hearts will sometimes incline you to unbelief, and flesh and blood will perhaps recoil, and be ready to turn aside: but whom the Lord loveth, he loveth unto the end; and his Apostle declares, 2 Tim. ii. 19.
" The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that
" are his." Continue therefore your spiritual sacrifices; continue to offer and present
unto

unto the Lord yourselves, your souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice: he will accept all as your bounden duty and service, not weighing your merits, but pardoning your offences through Jesus Christ our Lord; and you shall assuredly obtain, through faith in the Redeemer's blood, remission of your sins, and all other benefits of his passion, singing before the throne with
"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, Worthy is the Lamb
"that was slain to receive power, and riches,
"and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and
"glory, and blessing," Rev. v. 11, 12.

Having thus, brethren, laid before you the reasons which caused God not to have "respect unto Cain, and to his offering," and the reasons which caused him to have "respect unto Abel, and to his offering," I have only to request that you think of these things; that you take occasion to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;" and receive the word of God as that grand criterion by which you must be judged, and according to which your everlasting state at the

last great day will be decided. Oh may he
send down his Holy Spirit upon you, and
apply that which hath been now delivered
with an all-powerful and saving efficacy to
to your hearts and consciences!

SER-

SERMON VIII.

ON THE
NECESSITY
OF HAVING
THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

FROM ROMANS VIII. 9.

28. 10. 1942

ON THE
NECESSITY OF
HAYING

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

FROM ROBERT VILLI

ROMANS VIII. ver 9. latter part.

—If any man have not the Spirit of Christ,
he is none of his.

THE great Apostle, in this chapter, is setting forth the peculiar advantages of the Gospel dispensation. He begins with this most animating declaration, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Ver. 1, 2.

He next proceeds to shew the inability of the law to justify us before God, and takes occasion to speak of the righteousness of the Redeemer, by whom the law was fulfilled and magnified, justice satisfied, and the sinner saved. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness

“ of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin
 “ in the flesh: That the righteousness of the
 “ law might be fulfilled in us, who walk
 “ not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”
 Ver. 3, 4.

He then describes the character of those who are in a state of nature, and of those also who are in a state of grace. “ For they,” says he, ver. 5. “ that are after the flesh do
 “ mind the things of the flesh: but they
 “ that are after the Spirit the things of the
 “ Spirit.”

At length he comes to speak home and pointedly to the Roman converts, and fearing lest any of them should be deceiving their own souls with an outward profession only, he adjoins the words of our text, “ If any
 “ man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is
 “ none of his:” thereby teaching us, that if any person whatsoever hath not this divine presence thus residing within, and governing him, notwithstanding all his pretensions, he is none of Christ’s; he is not to be reckoned amongst his true disciples, but will be disowned by him at the last day, as one who
 has

hath abused that worthy name of a Christian, which he impiously assumed.

We are assured, brethren, that “no Scripture is of private interpretation,” but that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning” and admonition: what therefore is recorded in the passage now before us, is as much addressed to us as it was to the christian professors at Rome; and it equally concerns us to consider, That if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his.

I shall therefore, brethren, in the present discourse, take occasion to shew you, the need which every man hath of the Spirit of Christ, and the fruits or effects of the divine Spirit in every soul that partaketh of his sacred influence.

As to the need which every man hath of the Spirit of Christ, this will plainly appear from a serious and impartial consideration of the nature of man. Now the nature of man since the fall—and this you know, brethren, is our nature, for Adam became not a father

in

in his state of innocence—the nature of man since the fall is a nature directly opposite to the nature of God, his judgment being erroneous, his will perverse, and his affections earthly and sensual. Look into the judgment of the natural man, of the man whose heart is unregenerated by the Spirit of God: mark the decided preference which it evidences in favour of the riches, the honours, and the pleasures of this world, and the ignorance which it betrays with regard to the things of God and the life which is to come, and will you not be constrained to subscribe to to that declaration of St. Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

“ The natural man receiveth not the things of
 “ the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness
 “ unto him; neither can he know them,
 “ because they are spiritually discerned?”

Consider also, attentively consider, the account of Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, who came to Jesus by night, in order to enquire concerning him and his doctrines, and you must clearly perceive, from the judgment which he formed of “ the things of the Spirit
 “ of God,” and from his great ignorance respecting them, what man is; and how very
 I
 erroneous

erroneous his judgment whilst in a natural and unrenewed state. Consult, my brethren, the whole of this important narration as it stands recorded in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel.

Were we, brethren, to see a man who was condemned by the laws of his country to suffer death, passing his time in a careless and unprofitable manner; were we to see him, a few days before the time appointed for his execution, diverting his mind from the thoughts of futurity, and busily employing himself with the things of time and sense; what should we think of such a man? But this man art thou, whosoever he be of you, my brethren, that although condemned by the divine law as a sinner, art nevertheless living in an utter neglect of the means of salvation, and of that hastening moment when God will execute his threatenings on all those "that know him not, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Yes, thou art the man, whosoever thou mayest be, that art not renewed in the spirit of thy mind; for the thoughtlessness which has been described is an effect of man's natural and fallen state, and

and it will never be effectually removed till we are regenerated, and born again of the Holy Spirit of God.

Again: look into the will of the natural man; how prone to evil! how tied and bound by the chain of sin! how inclined to every thing corrupt, unholy, and displeasing to God! Indeed man is prone to evil as the sparks fly upwards, and naturally disinclined to those things which are pure and holy, and acceptable to God. Were not this the case, iniquity would not so universally abound; such dreadful oaths and imprecations would not shock our ears at every corner of the streets; such scenes of inebriety and dissoluteness would not wound our feelings; but God would be worshipped, feared, loved, and obeyed, as he delights to be, and as he requires of all his intelligent and accountable creatures.

Were man otherwise than what he is, allow me to add, evil would not be present with real Christians when they desire the most to do good; neither would they be constrained to acknowledge, with the Apostle, that though they delight in the law of God after the inward man,
yet

yet that they find another law in their members warring against the law of their minds, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin in their members, so as to constrain them to cry out, Oh wretched creatures that we are! who shall deliver us from the body of this death? Rom. vii. 22, 23, 24.

Once more: Look at the affections of the natural man; and where do they centre, on things above, or on things which are on the earth? Alas! my brethren, is not the Apostle's description in the 5th verse of the chapter before us, a very just, though a very melancholy one of us all in our natural estate, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh?" And if it be necessary to descend to particulars, in order to shew on what the natural man places his affections, we have only to refer to what the Apostle says, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell

“ tell you before, as I also told you in time
“ past, that they which do such things shall
“ not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Friends and brethren, observation and experience testify that on these things our affections are naturally placed, and that God is not in all our thoughts: yes, these things, these works of the flesh, more or less, mark the character of every man; for, as our Lord says, these things proceed from the heart, and defile us all; these things proceed from the heart of every man who is not a subject of the regenerating Spirit of God. Hence then, brethren, appears the need which every man hath of the Spirit of Christ; and hence the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, John iii. 3. receive the fullest confirmation, “ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born
“ again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Yes, brethren, the heart of man must undergo an important change; his judgment, his will, and his affections, must all of them be turned into a different channel by the powerful operation of God’s Holy Spirit before he can be truly called a Christian, before he can be capacitated for the kingdom of heaven.

Here,

Here, then, let us stop, and enquire how matters are between God and our own souls; and if our judgment, our will, and our affections, are such as have been delineated. Let us tremble for our future safety, since dying in our present state, we must absolutely be excluded from the celestial regions; for in the great day of Christ's appearing and glory, our text will be found strictly true, that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

But I hope in God that I am speaking to many who are the happy subjects of the Spirit's influence; to many who indeed belong to Christ, and who shall consequently be owned and acknowledged by him in the last great day, and be welcomed by him, as the blessed of his Father, to that kingdom which was prepared for them before the foundation of the world. And under this comfortable persuasion, I proceed with much satisfaction to the second head of our discourse, in which I am to shew you the fruits or effects of the divine Spirit in every soul that partakes of his sacred influence. And here I trust to be the
the

the happy instrument of strengthening your faith, and confirming your hope.

Brethren, if we turn again to the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, we shall find that besides the works of the flesh, there is also a list of the chief fruits or effects of the divine Spirit in the regenerate Christian given unto us: (ver. 22, 23.) "The fruit of
" the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffer-
" ing, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,
" temperance: against such there is no law."
And in the very next verse the whole seems to be comprehended in this one remark,
" And they that are Christ's have crucified
" the flesh with the affections and lusts."
As if the Apostle had said,—They that are the genuine partakers of the Spirit of Christ, and his real disciples, have their hearts turned from the love of those works of the flesh before enumerated. Like as Christ died upon the cross, they are crucified to all carnal and sensual passions; and like as Christ was raised from the dead, they also are raised from the death of sin, and made to walk in newness of life. Brethren, could I
engage

engage your attention for many days to this particular, I should be incapable of saying more than is expressed in these words of the Apostle, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

But besides the outward fruits and effects of the divine Spirit in every regenerate Christian, there are, if I may so speak, certain inward fruits and effects also; and it is very seasonable that I embrace this opportunity of mentioning some of them; your own experience, I hope, will be able to accompany me in the description.

The first inward effect produced by the Holy Spirit is a *sense of sin*: "When He is come," said our Lord to his disciples, speaking of the mission of the Holy Ghost, John xvi. 8.—"when He is come, he will reprove (or convince) the world of sin." And truly when the Spirit of God takes up his abode in us, he shews us immediately what poor offending mortals we all are. He exhibits to our view, in the strongest light, all the sins of our past lives; shews us the dreadful displeasure of God against us on their account;

M

and

and puts into our hearts and into our lips the language of the trembling jailor, Acts xvi. 30. "What must I do to be saved?"

Having thus convinced us of sin, the Spirit, by the word of the Gospel, points us to a Saviour, and bids us to "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And, in order to encourage us to lay hold on Christ for pardon and salvation, he shews us the fulness and the efficacy of his atonement, his willingness as well as his ability to "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him," Heb. vii. 25. Then the Spirit takes of the sacred mysteries of redeeming love, and reveals them to our souls; gives us "meat to eat that the world knows not of;" favours us with further and more distinct views of the everlasting love of God in Christ; makes us more and more indifferent and dead to the things of time and sense, and more and more attached and alive to the things of a glorious eternity—the things which belong to our peace as immortal beings.

Now the outward fruits before mentioned begin to blossom in our conduct. Our hearts glow

glow with love towards God and towards man, and every christian grace appears to flourish. We are ashamed of those things we once gloried in; we glory in those things whereof we were once ashamed. We are no longer the companions of fools, but we associate only with them that fear God. We consider ourselves as brands plucked from everlasting burnings; and we are lost in wonder, love, and praise, when we meditate on the grace of God, so large, and so freely vouchsafed unto us.

Further; the Holy Spirit teaches us how to act in that station of life to which it has pleased God to call us; what to do and what to say upon all occasions; and how to glorify God, as his Apostle hath enjoined us, 1 Cor. vi. 20. in our bodies and in our spirits, which are God's. And, above all things, the Spirit teaches us to maintain a perpetual watchfulness over our own hearts, and to practise continual prayer to God for his sanctifying grace, so that our lives may be the life of the righteous, and our last end like theirs.

Such, brethren, are the inward as well as the outward fruits and effects of the divine Spirit in every soul that partakes of his sacred influence. And here again I must call upon you to examine yourselves; for so sure as a man is destitute of these fruits or effects of the Spirit of Christ, he is at the same time destitute of the Spirit himself; and whatever profession he may make, he is still in his natural condition; he is still, with that old impostor, mentioned Acts viii. 23. "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Never, therefore, let us forget those words of Christ, equally applicable to christian professors as to prophets and preachers, Matt. vii. 17—20. "Ye shall know them by their fruits: do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Never let us forget the
Apostle's

Apostle's description of true believers, Rom. vi. 22. "being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Brethren, let us attentively regard the word and the testimony of God respecting this solemn and important subject. If we are not as Christians are here described to be, we are only deceiving our own selves, aggravating our guilt, and enhancing our condemnation. But here I repeat the pleasing hope I entertain, that I am speaking to many who are the happy subjects of these fruits or effects of the divine Spirit in the regenerate soul; to many who, from their own happy experience, can attest the truth of that which hath been spoken.

My dear christian friends, I shall conclude the present discourse with endeavouring to minister to you some words of consolation and encouragement. Know then, beloved in the Lord, that all those blessings of the Gospel dispensation, which are mentioned by the Apostle in the chapter before us, are yours. Were I to go into a particular recital of them, when should I dismiss your attention? I must,

however, read to you a few verses of this incomparable portion of holy writ. We will select the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th.

“ As many as are led by the Spirit of God,
“ they are the sons of God. For ye have
“ not received the spirit of bondage again to
“ fear; but ye have received the spirit of
“ adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
“ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our
“ spirit that we are the children of God. And
“ if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and
“ joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we
“ suffer with him, that we may be also glo-
“ rified together. For I reckon that the suf-
“ ferings of this present time are not worthy
“ to be compared with the glory which shall
“ be revealed in us.” Oh! do not your
hearts burn within you on the hearing of
such an address; and dispose you to join in
the sublime and exulting language of the
Apostle, from the 31st verse to the end of
the chapter? “ What shall we then say to
“ these things? If God be for us, who can
“ be against us? He that spared not his own
“ Son, but delivered him up for us all, how
“ shall he not with him also freely give us
“ all things? Who shall lay any thing to the
“ charge

“ charge of God’s elect? it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it
“ is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen
“ again, who is even at the right hand of
“ God, who also maketh intercession for us.
“ Who shall separate us from the love of
“ Christ? shall tribulation? or distress? or
“ persecution? or famine? or nakedness? or
“ peril? or sword? As it is written, For thy
“ sake we are killed all the day long; we are
“ accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay,
“ in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For
“ I am persuaded that neither death, nor life,
“ nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,
“ nor things present, nor things to come,
“ nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the
“ love of God which is in Christ Jesus our
“ Lord.”

Brethren, all these great and invaluable blessings of the Gospel dispensation belong to you, in whose hearts and lives the fruits or effects of the Spirit of God are increasing and abounding. Many, it is true, there are who would rob you of your hope; who would re-

present you to the world and to yourselves as persons who are "deceiving and being deceived." Yes, brethren, and there are some in the professing world who will presume to sit in judgment upon you, and attempt to weaken the evidences of your discipleship, and so to perplex and distress your minds. But remember, brethren, what the great Apostle says to Timothy, 2d Epist. ii. 19. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." Remember, you will not be sentenced at the last day according to man's judgment. Remember that that God who knows the principle and the cause of your every action, which narrow-minded and short-sighted mortals not being able to discern presume to censure—remember that he only condemns where you are condemned by your own hearts and consciences; so that notwithstanding all the ill-nature and envy of the world, you may say, with the Apostle John, 1 Epist. iii. 21. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

St.

St. Paul, who had within himself, and who gave to others, the strongest evidences of the in-dwelling of the Spirit of God, St. Paul was nevertheless most cruelly censured and misrepresented, and that by some from whom he might reasonably have expected very different treatment. But hear his noble profession to the Corinthians, 2d Epist. i. 12. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." Let this, Christians, be your reply to the confusion of the ungodly that asperse and vilify you; and may you find it to be the joy and comfort of your own souls! you, I mean, whose hope in Christ, and whose characters in the church, the world would fain destroy; remembering, that so long as there are such persons to be met with, the followers of Christ must expect to be censured, traduced, arraigned, and condemned at their tribunal. But, as an antidote against their enmity and opposition, I say again, Christians, all the blessings of the Gospel dispensation are yours. Labour to believe this,

this—to believe the love which God hath towards you in Christ Jesus, and then your duty will be your privilege, your work will be your reward. You will find prayer to God, in the name of his well-beloved Son, your rest and your asylum from Satan's rage and from the world's malice, at the same time that you are receiving grace to help you through all your conflicts and temptations, and having, as the Apostle expresses it, Gal. vi. 8. "sown to the Spirit, you shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

To Him, therefore, with the Father and the Son, Three Persons in one undivided Godhead, be ascribed equal and everlasting praise. Amen.

SERMON IX.

ON THE

WIDOW'S SON RAISED TO LIFE.

FROM ST. LUKE VII. 13.

SERMON IX

WIDOW'S SON RAISED TO LIFE

John 11

ST. LUKE VII. ver. 13. latter part.

—Weep not.

IT is well considered as a mark of real regard and affection, when, for the sake and benefit of his friend, a man will submit himself to inconveniences, distresses, and sufferings. Brethren, such a mark of the most pure and disinterested friendship the Son of God hath condescended to give us: for our sake and for our salvation he quitted the regions of glory, veiled himself in human flesh, suffered all the miseries of this mortal life, and at length submitted himself to the most painful death, even the death of the cross. Never love was like his love; and in order to evidence it, he thus became what the Prophet had represented him, “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” Yes, Jesus suffered and sorrowed, bled and died, that he might address the sons and daughters of adversity in the words of our text:—Jesus wept—that he might graciously say to us, under all

all the various circumstances of distress and affliction which we are liable to in this world, and which, in some degree, we shall all experience before we depart out of it—"Weep not."

The sacred narrative which contains this address is of a nature so affecting and so interesting, and affords opportunity for so many useful remarks, that I cannot but review it, and indulge some passing reflections: and this plan of instruction will, I hope, be so accompanied with the divine blessing, that we may hear the voice of the Son of God "to-day, " whilst it is called to-day," and be saved from misery and sin in this world, from destruction and perdition in the next.

We read, brethren, at the 11th verse of the chapter, for there the sacred narrative commences, of our Lord's setting off from Capernaum to the city of Nain: "And (saith the " Evangelist) it came to pass the day after, " that he went into a city called Nain: and " many of his disciples went with him, and " much people." It was the business of our Lord to go about doing good: and no wonder that his disciples, those who were desirous

desirous of divine instruction, those who were obedient to his word, those who relied for pardon and salvation on him, should follow him whithersoever he went. Brethren, it is one evidence of discipleship that we follow in the way where the mighty acts of the Redeemer are now rehearsed, and where his love and grace are told of: that man is no disciple of Jesus, who has no desire to enter into the courts of his house. But it seems that not only his disciples, but much people went with our Lord to Nain: so that we may be present in the assemblies of God's people, and yet not be of the number of true disciples; we may follow in the way merely out of curiosity, or for the sake of some temporal advantage. Our presence here to-day is certainly an evidence of discipleship before the world; but let every one take heed to himself, and examine his own heart by the declaration which Jesus made, Matt. xvi. 24. "If any
" man will come after me, let him deny him-
" self, and take up his cross, and follow me." Brethren, if we are not living in the exercise of self-denial, if we are not bearing the cross, we are deceiving our own souls.

But

But we return to the history at ver. 12. where we read these affecting lines: "Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her." It was the custom of the Jews to have their burial places at some small distance from their cities, and therefore it was that the funeral procession met our Lord nigh to the gate of Nain. The person whom they were carrying forth was one very much lamented, and especially by a fond mother, whose only son he was, and to whom he had been greatly endeared, she being in a state of widowhood, and provided for, perhaps, by his industry and filial regard. Present to the eyes of your mind the poor widow following her only son to "the place appointed for all living:" What a sorrowful, what an affecting scene! Let the parent who has felt the loss of a dear and dutiful child describe (for none but such an one can describe) the feelings of the disconsolate widow. It is highly probable that as she followed the dear remains, fetching many a heavy sigh, she gave vent to her grief

grief in language similar to this:—“ Oh my son! my dear, my darling child! And art thou gone? Art thou no more to comfort thy loving mother? Shall these weeping eyes no more, no more behold thee? Oh cruel, cruel death, to tear from a poor widow her only son! Oh that I had been taken too! Oh that I could now be lain with thee in the silent tomb! How, how shall I bear this melancholy providence, oh my son, my son!”

Great indeed, brethren, was the distress of the poor widow: and let me remind you, that this world is a vale of tears; that we can enter no city without meeting with much distress; and that all these miseries are owing to sin. Where is the individual to be found who knows no sorrow, when the Scriptures inform us, “ Man is born to trouble as the “ sparks fly upwards?” Happiness is a plant which doth not grow on this soil; and does not reason join with revelation, does not every sorrow and every pang of distress we feel, call loudly upon us to seek a better, an enduring city? a city where sorrow and sighing shall be no more? That man who experiences most of the troubles of this mortal life, and remains

178 *On the Widow's Son raised to Life.*

wedded to such a state, and indifferent about eternity, that man is of all others the greatest object of concern and pity. Art thou mourning the loss of a near and tender relative, who was the comfort of thy heart, the joy of thy life? and canst thou still love the world? Canst thou still refuse to give up thyself to God? Art thou feeling the bitterness of sorrow, and canst thou yet prefer a howling wilderness to a land of unmixed delight? Oh may the Lord God sanctify all the afflictions of life, and make them the means of bringing us to himself!

We now refer you to the verse of which our text is a part. "And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not," ver. 13. When the mournful scene presented itself, when our Lord saw the poor widow bathed in tears, his bowels of compassion yearned over her pitiable state, and he went up to her and said, "Weep not;"—I am able to save thee from this distress, and I will exert my divine power in thy behalf.—Friends and brethren, great is the compassion of the Lord Jesus to the mourner. He was promised to the world
(see

(see Isa. lxi. 2.) as the all-gracious character who should comfort all that mourn; and whatever be our distress, if we apply to him by prayer and in faith, we shall know of his almighty love. And recollect what he has declared concerning those who mourn on account of sin, Matt. v. 4. "Blessed are they that
"mourn, for they shall be comforted." Come, then, ye who are lamenting your sins, ye who are groaning beneath the heaviest of burdens, come to Jesus, and he will have mercy on you, and keep your souls from sinking under their load of guilt and condemnation. Though exalted far above all heavens, he is a present help in every time of need. He is near to all that mourn, and especially to those who mourn on account of sin: and he is tenderly
"touched with a feeling of our infirmities,
"having been in all points tempted like as
"we are, yet without sin," Heb. iv. 15.
"Weep not" is his language; I am he that comforteth you, I am he that blotteth out your transgressions, "weep not."

We proceed to the 14th verse. "And he
"came and touched the bier; and they that
"bare him stood still: and he said, Young

“man, I say unto thee, Arise.” When our blessed Lord addressed the poor widow, and said unto her, “Weep not,” no doubt but her grief was somewhat stilled, and her desponding heart somewhat cheered, for it is natural to suppose that she cherished hope of consolation of some kind. But who can describe her astonishment and anxious expectation, when, after touching the bier on which the lifeless corpse of her son was laid, he, who was Lord both of the dead and living, addressed himself to the corpse, and with a voice of power and authority, blended with tenderness and mercy, bid it arise? Oh blessed Jesus! thou art full of compassion and pity with respect both to the souls and bodies of men, and able to save to the uttermost!

But, brethren, I would here remark, that the same Jesus who bid the widow's son to arise from the bier, bids sinners to arise from the death of sin. Alas! there is a death more lamentable than the death of the body, I mean the death of the soul! And by nature we are all in this state of spiritual death, dead, as the Apostle expresses it, Eph. ii. 1. “dead in trespasses and sins.” We are alive to
the

the things of time and sense, to the businesses and pleasures of the world; but to the things of God our spiritual senses are devoid of all life and activity. We are dead till we hear the voice of the Son of God, in the sound of his Gospel, saying unto us, *Live*; and therefore St. Paul tells the Ephesians, that when they were in that state God had quickened them. But for a full and final proof that we are by nature dead in sin, and that we are raised to spiritual life by the word of Christ, I refer you to John v. 25. "Verily, verily, "I say unto you, The hour is coming, and "now is, when the dead shall hear the voice "of the Son of God; and they that hear shall "live." It is evident that our Lord is here speaking of the spiritually dead, and declaring the wonderful energy of his Gospel in their spiritual resurrection; their resurrection from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. How thankful then, brethren, ought we to be for the ministration of the divine word; and how ought all who know the privilege of prayer to look up for the divine blessing on the word of God's grace, that it may come with power, and that there may be "added "to the church daily such as shall be saved!"

Oh may the Son of God speak to-day to some poor soul dead in sin, and give him to know of this doctrine! then will there be joy equal to, yea greater than the joy of the poor widow, when she saw her son obey the divine command of Jesus—Arise!

But look, brethren, at the 15th verse:

“And he that was dead sat up, and began

“to speak, and he delivered him to his

“mother.” Here we are informed of the

effect of our Lord's address to the widow's

son. No sooner did Christ speak than he

was obeyed, to the astonishment of every be-

holder, and to the unspeakable comfort of

the poor widow. The young man sat up,

and gave undeniable evidences of the return

of life. And oh how great was the good-

ness of Him who raised from death the la-

mented youth, and, with all the sympathising

kindness of a friend, restored him to his fond

mother!—I said, that only the parent could

describe the feelings of the disconsolate widow

following her son to the tomb; but not even

the parent can properly describe what passed

within her breast when she beheld the object

of her love restored: surely she must have

continued

continued weeping, changing only the nature of her tears; before tears of grief—now tears of gratitude: surely she must have been overpowered with the display of such compassion; and if she became not from that memorable hour the devoted disciple of Jesus, all must have cried out against her.

Brethren, I have three remarks to make from this part of the sacred narrative.

First, I would remark to you, that this display of almighty power and love, in the restoration of the widow's son, was among the proofs of the divinity of our Lord's person and character, and a very striking evidence of his being indeed the promised Messiah. We read at the 18th verse of this chapter, that "the disciples of John shewed him of all these things;" viz. how Jesus had healed the centurion's servant, as it stands recorded from the first to the eleventh verse, and raised the widow's son from death: and we are informed at the twenty-second verse, that this was the answer which our Lord gave to the two disciples whom John had sent to him, to ask whether he were indeed the Messiah that

should come into the world; "Go your way,
 "and tell John what things ye have seen and
 "heard, how that the blind see, the lame
 "walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear,
 "the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel
 "is preached." There can be no greater
 proof of the divinity of our Lord than this
 of his raising the dead; but this proof he
 gave in the instance before us, and a little
 after in that of Lazarus at Bethany.

I would remark, secondly, that when sin-
 ners hear the voice of the Son of God, and
 are raised from the death of sin to a new and
 spiritual life, they give evidence thereof by
 their future conduct; as the widow's son sat
 up and spake, they forsake sin, and shew forth
 the praises of their God. Brethren, unless
 our lives are becoming the Gospel of Christ,
 it cannot be that the Gospel has been the
 power of God to our salvation: unless we
 "let our light shine before men," so that they
 see our good works, it is impossible that God
 should be glorified by us; it is impossible
 for those that behold us to be edified by our
 example.

I would

I would remark, thirdly, that our Lord, by delivering the restored youth to his mother, gave a very decided proof, that he wished the partakers of his grace and mercy to be attentive to all the relative duties. "Honour thy father and mother" is the first commandment to which a promise is annexed. And we are not to think that our duty to our Father which is in heaven is to preclude obedience to our earthly parents, or to excuse the neglect of any social or relative duty: Jesus himself was subject to his earthly parents, and in proportion as we are his disciples, we shall learn of him how to discharge this and every other obligation.

We come now, brethren, to the conclusion of this sacred narration. We read, ver. 16. "And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people." Thus far the miracle was rendered effectual to all that beheld it, and there can be no doubt but that the souls of many were comforted and edified by it; there can be no doubt but while all were led by it to own our Lord as a great prophet,
many

many were induced to receive him as their priest and king. May we, brethren, who have been at this time reviewing the miracle, not content ourselves with contemplating and praising the great power and love of Jesus to poor sinners; but may we beseech him to have mercy upon us, to exert his divine power in our behalf, and to save our souls with a present and with an everlasting salvation! indeed we should make the matter of every sermon a matter of prayer.

Men and brethren, as the widow's son was carried forth to his burial, we shall each of us one day be the subject of a funeral procession. There is scarce an individual present, I should suppose, but has followed to the tomb some relation or friend, stood by the opened grave ready to receive him, and beheld the lamented corpse interred, while the solemn words 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,' have been pronounced. Oh! do we recollect, do we consider, that it will, and very soon, perhaps, be our turn to engage these last offices of love? Alas! we too seldom reflect on our own mortality, and bring the subject home to our own hearts: rather,

rather, do we not too often return from a grave, from a friend's grave, from a parent's grave, from a child's grave, without remembering that it is appointed unto us also to die, and after this the judgment? But to correct this fatal insensibility and unconcern, I shall remind you of another declaration of our Lord's, which stands recorded in the 5th of St. John's Gospel, ver. 28, 29. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Oh! can we hear this awful declaration, and not be seriously concerned for our never-dying souls? Brethren, if we have not heard the voice of the Son of God bidding us to arise from the grave of sin, and if, in proof of this, we are not walking in newness of life, we can have no hope of a joyful resurrection; of hearing the voice of Jesus when he shall call his people forth in the last great day to immortal life and glory: but if, on the other hand, we, who were once dead in sin, are now quickened, and made spiritually alive, the voice of Jesus

in

in the day of judgment will be as delightful as it was to the widow of Nain; yes, my dear brethren, the joyful words, "I say unto thee, Arise," will give us everlasting comfort. When our Lord said to the widow, "Weep not," it was only in reference to her present sorrow, as no doubt she wept afterwards on other occasions, and, unless she was first called to the tomb, the time returned when she again mourned for her son: but oh how vastly superior to her's will be the advantage of all true believers! for when, in the great day of his appearing and glory, Jesus shall bid them to arise, it shall be to weep no more; it shall be to admit them to a place, where, as the divine Apostle speaks, Rev. xxi. 4. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Oh! what a reproach is it that Christians, who look for such a place and state as this, do not more frequently and joyfully anticipate it, and more ardently long for its arrival! With respect to our dear departed friends and brethren

brethren in the Lord, who are gone before us, let us not sorrow for them as those that have no hope beyond the grave : and with respect to ourselves, let it be our earnest and constant prayer that we may die more to sin, and to all the vain and short-lived enjoyments of this present world ; that we may live more to God, and have our hearts there more surely fixed, where alone true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord !

On the Widow's Son raised to Life. 189

beholden in the Lord, who are gone before us.
let us not sorrow for them as those that have
no hope beyond the grave: and with respect
to ourselves, let us be our earnest and constant
prayer that we may die more to sin, and to all
the vain and short-lived enjoyments of this
present world; that we may live more to God,
and have our hearts there more fully fixed,
where alone our joys are to be found, through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

PER

SERMON X.

THE PARALYTIC HEALED.

FROM ST. MATT. IX. 2.

REFORM

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

11

ST. MATT. ix. ver. 2. latter part.

—Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

I KNOW not, brethren, that any thing could afford me more comfort, than to have a satisfactory assurance that these words of the Saviour of the world were applicable to every individual who has come hither to hear the joyful sound of the Gospel, for then, indeed, you would all have cause to say, "It is good for us to draw nigh to God." Brethren, the ear of God is not heavy, that he cannot hear—the hand of God is not shortened, that he cannot save—his compassions fail not—his mercy is over all his works—it is not his will that any should perish; and therefore, in the diligent use of the appointed means of grace, in an attention to the word of life and salvation, with a sincere heart, we may hope the best of things. Oh may our attention be solemnly fixed, and the arm of the Lord revealed in the work of faith with power!

The words of the text, brethren, were primarily addressed by our Lord to a poor paralytic, who had been brought to him by certain believing people to be cured. A circumstantial account of this transaction is handed down to us by two other of the Evangelists. There is some little difference in their narrations, but the sum and substance are the same, so that I shall confine myself to the account before me. St. Matthew thus relates the matter, ver. 1, 2. “ And he entered into a ship, and
“ passed over, and came into his own city.
“ And behold, they brought to him a man
“ sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus
“ seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the
“ palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be
“ forgiven thee.”

The people, you perceive, took the poor man to our Lord for a bodily cure, but behold he had mercy on his soul! regarding and relieving a disease worse, far worse, than the palsy—the disease of sin! Ah! brethren, like the friends of the poor paralytic, we are all apt to be more concerned about the body than the soul: the smallest pain hastens us to the means of cure; but although we are in the

the very situation described by the prophet Isaiah, chap. i. 6. having "no soundness in us, but full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores," diseased and disordered by sin; yet are we indifferent, and even averse, to the remedy prescribed in the Gospel.

Let us, however, notice the sequel from the third to the middle of the sixth verse of the chapter from which our text is taken. "And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins"——

Brethren, in speaking as he did to the poor paralytic, our Lord gave a decided proof of his divinity; and when the Scribes and Pharisees exclaimed, "This man blasphemeth!" they in effect acknowledged this important doctrine; it was similar to the title which the enemies of our Lord put upon his cross, which, though done by them in mockery and

derision, was nevertheless a just and proper title, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." But I hope I am speaking to those who believe the divinity of Jesus; if there are among us any who disbelieve it, may the circumstance of his forgiving sins (which the Scribes and Pharisees justly represented to belong to God alone) serve to convince them of their dangerous error.

We are informed in the latter part of the sixth, and the seventh verses, "Then saith he " to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy " bed, and go unto thine house. And he " arose, and departed to his house." By which it appears, that whilst our compassionate Lord did more and better for the poor man than he was solicited to do, he graciously condescended to shew the mercy implored in his behalf. Brethren, whatever we ask for in faith, we shall certainly receive in due time. And oh what a sweet assurance of all temporal good have they who are enriched with spiritual blessings! when, to use the Apostle's words, Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not " his own Son, but delivered him up for us " all,

“all, how shall he not with him also freely
“give us all things?”

St. Matthew finishes the account with telling us, ver. 8. “When the multitude saw
“it, they marvelled, and glorified God,
“which had given such power unto men.”
They wondered, as they had been accustomed to do; and praised God, as they had been accustomed to do; not for sending his Son into the world to save sinners, but for giving
“such power unto men;” that is, for raising up a great prophet to heal the disorders of the body; since, as they did not believe the godhead of Jesus Christ, so neither did they regard the mercy he had shewn to the paralytic in forgiving his sins. Oh how unhappy is the man, who, like these Scribes and Pharisees, is wilfully blind to truth, and rejects the clearest evidence! Praised be God that the very relation of what the Scribes and Pharisees saw with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears, has been the means of producing faith in many hearts! I hope, brethren, it has strengthened your faith this day:
“Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and
“your ears, for they hear!”

Having thus noticed the context, the text itself now claims all our attention—"Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Brethren, there are four remarks to which these words have led me. And the first is this, That every individual stands in need of the forgiveness of sins.—The second, That there is only one way whereby the forgiveness of sins can be obtained.—The third, That the man whose sins are forgiven him, has the most abundant cause to "be of good cheer."—And the fourth, That such a man is under the strongest obligations to love God, and keep his commandments.

I. When I remark, That every individual stands in need of the forgiveness of sin, I do not, brethren, speak beyond the express testimony of holy writ, and the frank confessions of all who are taught of God. One of the many sacred passages to be here adduced stands on record in Rom. v. 12. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so that death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Here we have the fullest proof of the doctrine advanced; and, trusting in God that I am speaking to persons who admit

admit the authority of his revealed word, it cannot be necessary to bring forward one other passage: I will therefore only refer you to 1 John i. 8. where you will find a fair and just confession of sin; a confession in which, I am confident, all will unite who are taught of God—"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Did I say that this was a confession in which all would unite who were taught of God? I might have ventured to assert, that there is no individual of the sons of men who will dare to disavow the propriety of it. Now, brethren, if all have sinned, and we deceive ourselves if we say that we have not sinned, then it is plain that every individual of the human race stands in need of forgiveness, and unless he obtains it, he is a miserable and ruined creature. 'A God all mercy,' as Dr. Young well says, 'is a God unjust:—yes, brethren, and it is cherishing ideas of God which we would not entertain concerning an earthly prince or legislator, to think that sin shall go unpunished. But the case is this; many say in their hearts, like the fool, of whom David speaks, Psalm xiv. 1. "There is no God;" or, if there is, he is too great

to notice any of the actions of his creatures; or, he doth not know them. Oh what glaring infidelity, what dishonourable thoughts of the Supreme Being do these suggestions indicate! It is observed, that free-thinkers are commonly free-livers, and the observation is generally true; men endeavour to persuade themselves that they are not accountable for their actions, and the consequence is, they give themselves up to every evil way. But as "there is a reward for the righteous," there is also "a God that judgeth the earth." Happy are you, brethren, who are thoroughly persuaded of this truth, and who, from a consciousness of your sins, and a serious apprehension of the wrath of God revealed against them, consider the remission of sins as the glorious peculiarity of the christian religion, and are seeking it with your whole heart, as that which, in the judgment of every real penitent, is the very summit of blessedness. David thought so when he said, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

My

My second remark is this—That there is only one way whereby the forgiveness of sins can be obtained.

2.

Brethren, if there be any of you that were formerly unconcerned and thoughtless respecting your condition as sinners against God, but are now beginning to see that you stand in need, in extreme need, of the forgiveness of sins, you will anxiously listen to what I have to say concerning the way, the only way, by which forgiveness is attainable. This, on the authority of God's sacred word, I solemnly declare unto you, is only by the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ, that divine and glorious person who said to the poor paralytic, "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." When men are first convinced of sin, and given to see their danger as sinners, they are apt to ground their hope of pardon on something or other which they think they can do, in order to make an atonement to divine justice. They trust to their repentance, their amendment of life, their punctuality in attending upon religious ordinances, accompanied with some general ideas of the divine mercy. But here, ye awakened sinners,

sinners, here ye must seek, and hither ye must come, even to the Lord Jesus Christ, the foundation which God hath laid in Zion, the Rock of Ages, and the world's Redeemer, if you would obtain forgiveness with your offended Maker, and possess that "peace of God which passeth all understanding." If you turn to the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you will there find a plain and particular direction, which Paul and Silas gave on this subject to a certain man, who, having been alarmed on account of his sins by means of an awful providence, came trembling before them with that most important question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" To whom they instantly replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," ver. 31. And, let me tell you, brethren, that while no man can be saved in any other way—that while no man can obtain the forgiveness of his sins but through the redemption of the Son of God—every one that is seriously concerned about forgiveness may be sure of obtaining it, if he seeks it in this one only way of God's appointing, since "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth
" in

“ in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” John iii. 16. And it is the invitation of the Son of God himself, Matt. xi. 28. “ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” We pray in our Communion Service, ‘ that by the merits and death of Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion.’ In this way, therefore, my beloved brethren, your sins shall be forgiven, as many of you as feel the weight and burden of them, and apply to the Saviour of sinners with that humble and believing frame of mind in which the poor paralytic was brought to Jesus for a bodily cure. What he did then for the bodies, he now does for the souls of men. God help us all to feel our spiritual maladies, and to draw nigh to him by a true faith; sensible that “ there is salvation in none other, neither is there any other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!”

My third remark is this—That the man whose sins are forgiven him, has the most abundant cause to be of good cheer.

Were

Were we, brethren, to form our opinions, and judge from outward appearances, we should frequently err, and especially concerning the happiness of mankind. The most wretched often appear the most happy. A gilded chariot often contains a distracted heart. I have read of a certain king, whose custom it was to lead his captives in triumph through the streets, arrayed in the most magnificent dresses, and attended by his guards. Now, to one who was a stranger to the real condition of these poor insulted persons, all this pomp and pageantry had the semblance of great earthly felicity and glory. It is often thus with regard to poor sinners, who are led captive at the will of Satan, their cruel oppressor, and, through his influence, tied and bound with the chain of their sins. See them at their pleasures and amusements, and they appear the happiest people in the world. But, alas! this is only a deception, since they are not in reality what they seem to be. The man whose sins are forgiven is the only one that is truly happy; for his happiness is founded on a solid and permanent basis, and is not liable to those fluctuations which continually interrupt the felicity of the men of this world; adversity will not impair it, old
age

age will not make it wither, nor will even death destroy it.

Before our Lord exerted his divine power in healing the paralytic, he condescended to address him in the joyful language of our text, "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee:" as if he had said, "I pardon thy sins, and therefore thou art a happy man, though I might suffer thee to continue a paralytic all thy days." Oh, brethren, if our sins are forgiven us, and God "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ," in the midst of all our bodily pains and infirmities, our temporal afflictions and distresses, we have abundant cause for joy and thankfulness, and may well say with the Apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal!" Indeed, the happiness connected with this state of mind is such as cannot fully be expressed: all that we can say
respecting

respecting those who, by divine grace, are brought into it, is, that God is their God and father in Christ Jesus—that they are his children—and that having guided them by his counsel, he will at length receive them to his eternal glory. I sincerely pray that more of us may know this blessedness for ourselves, and that those of us who do know it may prize it more highly, and improve it more diligently and faithfully than we have ever yet done.

This brings me to the fourth and last remark, viz. That such a man, whose sins are forgiven him, is under the strongest obligations to love God, and keep his commandments.

Can you, brethren, for one moment suppose that the restored paralytic did not evidence the warmest gratitude to his compassionate Redeemer? Can you suppose that he did not immediately join the number of his obedient servants, and, constrained by the love of Christ, take up his cross and follow him? In like manner, they—they that have obtained the forgiveness of their sins, through the faith
of

of Jesus, are cleansed from the pollution and delivered from the power of sin by his Holy Spirit: and hence, says the Apostle, Tit. ii. 14. "He gave himself for us, that he might
"redeem us from all iniquity, and purify
"unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of
"good works." Indeed, brethren, in proportion to our sense of the great evil of sin, as well as in proportion to the greatness of our past offences, will be our love (evinced by every good word and work) to the all-gracious Redeemer.

Here I would bring to your recollection a part of the gospel history, which I trust will strengthen my present remark. You will find it Luke vii. 36. to the end. "And one of
"the Pharisees desired him that he would
"eat with him: and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And
"behold, a woman in the city, which was
"a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at
"meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an
"alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his
"feet behind him weeping, and began to
"wash his feet with tears, and did wipe
"them with the hairs of her head, and kissed
"his

his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee: and he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both: tell me therefore which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most: and he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this
“ woman

“ woman hath anointed my feet with oint-
“ ment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her
“ sins, which are many, are forgiven; for
“ she loved much: but to whom little is for-
“ given, the same loveth little. And he said
“ unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they
“ that sat at meat with him began to say
“ within themselves, Who is this that for-
“ giveth sins also? And he said to the wo-
“ man, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in
“ peace.”

Now, brethren, I have only to add, that if our sins are forgiven us; if we have sincerely repented of them, and universally forsaken them; if we have felt our extreme need of forgiveness, and obtained mercy, we are giving all diligence to make our calling and our election sure, and, like the woman, we are shewing every mark of love and affection to our dear Redeemer. The grand matter of enquiry then is this—Have we forsaken sin? Have we abandoned our former sinful courses? Has that grace of God, which is rendered so conspicuous in the remission of sins, and in the salvation of penitent sinners, through faith in Christ, both taught and

enabled us to “ deny ungodliness and worldly
“ lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and
“ godly, in this present world?”

I earnestly recommend these inquiries to
your most serious and impartial considera-
tion; intreating you not to deceive yourselves
respecting them, but at the same time praying
that we may each of us be enabled to take up
these words of the four first verses of the
103d Psalm, with which I shall conclude.

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is
“ within me bless his holy name. Bless the
“ Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his
“ benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniqui-
“ ties; who healeth all thy diseases; who
“ redeemeth thy life from destruction; who
“ crowneth thee with loving-kindness and
“ tender mercies.”

SERMON XI.

GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

FROM GALATIANS VI. 14.

289409 X

... OF CHRIST

10

[illegible]

100

100

1990

100

1990

all of which are available in the public domain.

1990

100

100

100

11



GALATIANS VI. 14.

God, forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

ST. Paul's epistle to the Galatians appears to have been written on account of the departure of some amongst them from the true doctrine of the Gospel. Owing to the craftiness of certain false teachers, the Galatians had been drawn into a great error respecting the important doctrine of justification. It had been insinuated to them that circumcision, and other works of the ceremonial law, were necessary to the justification of a sinner before God. A more destructive notion could not possibly have gained ground among a people; I say more destructive, because nothing could be so derogatory to the finished work of Christ for our full salvation. Now as these corrupt doctrines had drawn many aside, St. Paul could not withhold his

pen; he wrote an epistle to the Galatians to refute the errors that had crept in amongst them: a composition which has ever been, and without doubt ever will be, most highly esteemed in all the churches of the saints. In the commencement of this epistle, St. Paul establishes his own character as a minister, and an apostle of the Lord: for the false teachers who had insinuated themselves among the Galatians, had taken occasion to speak lightly of the true ambassadors of Christ. After St. Paul had established his own character, he proceeds to declare to the Galatians, that there was no other gospel than that which he had preached to them; and that if “righteousness came by the law, then Christ was dead in vain.” He then sharply, though with evident signs of an unfeigned affection for them, rebukes them for their unsteadiness. “Oh foolish Galatians,” says he, chap. iii. 1—3. “who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having

“ having begun in the Spirit, are ye now
“ made perfect by the flesh?” From hence
the Apostle takes occasion to prove to them,
by various arguments, the doctrine of justifi-
cation by faith in Christ: that doctrine which
the Church of England holds forth in the
11th Article of her confession of faith. This
great point the Apostle takes occasion to elu-
cidate, and earnestly exhorts the Galatians to
return from their error, and obey the truth.
But what I would particularly point out to
you, as preparatory to a consideration of the
text selected, is, the bold manner in which
the great Apostle exposes the hypocrisy of
those teachers who had corrupted the Gala-
tians. He tells them, that the design of those
men, in wishing to establish circumcision,
was merely to make a pretence to the world,
and to avoid that persecution which awaited
every sincere believer. It seems that the Jews
were rather favourable to those Christians who
retained the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, and
that some of the Roman emperors gave liberty
to the Jews to use their religious exercises.
Let us bear these circumstances in mind in
reading the 12th and 13th verses of the chap-
ter now before us; “ As many as desire to

216 *Glorying in the Cross of Christ.*

“ make a fair shew in the flesh, they con-
 “ strain you to be circumcised; only lest they
 “ should suffer persecution for the cross of
 “ Christ. For neither they themselves who
 “ are circumcised keep the law, but desire to
 “ have you circumcised, that they may glory
 “ in your flesh.” And thus it was that the
 Apostle was led to break forth in the words
 of our text, “ But God forbid that I should
 “ glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus
 “ Christ, by whom the world is crucified
 “ unto me, and I unto the world.” A late
 divine has given us the following paraphrase
 on this text; ‘ But for my part I have no such
 ‘ selfish, worldly views; and God forbid that
 ‘ I should glory either in my descent or cir-
 ‘ cumcision, in my abilities or interest in
 ‘ making converts, or indeed in any thing
 ‘ else, unless it be in the regard I have been
 ‘ brought to pay to the cross of our Lord
 ‘ Jesus Christ, and the reliance which I have
 ‘ for justification on his death and sufferings;
 ‘ by the believing views of which I am made
 ‘ indifferent to all things here, and *the world*
 ‘ *is crucified unto me, and I unto the world;*
 ‘ so that I view the world as little impressed
 ‘ by all its characters, as a spectator would
 ‘ be

‘ be by any thing which had been graceful
‘ in the countenance of a crucified person,
‘ when he beholds it blackened in the agonies
‘ of death; and am no more affected by the
‘ objects round me, than one that is expiring
‘ would be struck with any of those prospects
‘ which his dying eyes might view from the
‘ cross on which he was suspended.’—“ God
“ forbid that I should glory, save in the cross
“ of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the
“ world is crucified unto me, and I unto the
“ world.”—Friends and brethren, this should
be the language of every one who calls him-
self a Christian. Now to be the humble
means, ~~in the great and powerful hand of~~
God, of helping all present to adopt this
language in perfect truth, I will endeavour
to shew, that there is nothing in which any
man ought to glory but in the cross of Christ;
—that every Christian has the most undoubted
right, and the most abundant cause to glory
in that; and that the world is crucified unto
the real Christian, and he to the world.—
May God bless this feeble attempt, to the
comfort and instruction of his people!

First,

First, That there is nothing in which any man ought to glory, but the *cross of Christ*; and that every Christian has the most undoubted right and the most abundant cause to glory in *that*. To glory in any thing, means, you know, to esteem it in the highest degree—to entertain the most exalted sentiments respecting it—to venerate it to the uttermost. Brethren, in what but the cross of Christ can we thus glory? God says by Jeremiah, *chap. ix. 23*. “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.” If you need proof that there is no cause for glorying in these worldly advantages, turn to 1 Cor. iv. 7. “For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” Mark the argument here used by the Apostle—“Who maketh thee to differ?” Brethren, if we are wise as to the affairs of this world, if we are conversant in the sciences of the age, we have to be thankful for our advantages, but we have nothing to glory of before God; from God we received our advantages. There
is

is a further reason to be given for not glorying in them; the time is coming when they will all be of no account—"Whether there be
"prophecies they shall fail; whether there
"be tongues they shall cease; whether there
"be knowledge it vanisheth." Knowledge will not save us from death—knowledge will not screen us from the just judgment of God: on the contrary, if we have knowledge, and make not a proper use of it, the greater will be our condemnation. And, brethren, with respect to the knowledge of divine truths, with respect to a knowledge of the great doctrines of the Gospel, let me take occasion to observe, that "the servant who knoweth
"his Lord's will, and doeth it not, shall be
"beaten with many stripes;" and that "the
"wrath of God abideth on the children of
"disobedience," whatever be their attainments.

What we have observed concerning knowledge or wisdom, will hold true with respect to might and riches. The most powerful monarch that ever trod the earth, received his power from God, and was doomed, like the meanest of his subjects, to return to his original

ginal dust. Where is Cæsar? Where is Alexander? Where are they who once made the world to tremble?—blended, like others, with the soil of the earth: “We see,” says the Psalmist, “that wise men die, likewise “the fool and the brutish person perish, and “leave their wealth to others.” There is no distinction in death; the rich are food for worms as well as the seemingly forsaken poor, who “desired the crumbs that fell “from the rich man’s table.” And do we not learn from the book of God, that neither might or wealth save from death eternal? Oh then shall the “wise man” glory in his wisdom, or the mighty man glory in his “might, or the rich man glory in his “riches?” Such glorying is evil.

But wrong as it is to glory in our earthly attainments or possessions, it is still more reprehensible to glory in pleasure. “Lovers “of pleasure more than lovers of God,” is the characteristic mark of many who ‘profess ‘and call themselves Christians;’ and of such it may be said that they “glory in their “shame.” Alas! how many glory in the pleasures of a world that passeth away! All
I their

their delight is in hurrying from one scene of dissipation to another. Nay, even the Sabbath, the day concerning which God hath commanded that it should be kept holy, this sacred day is prostituted to pleasure! I will not take up one moment of your time in proving that these things ought not so to be; for it is plainly written, that to "all who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, God will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." Granted, that the lovers of pleasure do not glory before God, do not set up the idol of their hearts as the hope of their future happiness; yet as they glory in what is opposite to the genius of the Gospel; they may be said to "glory in their shame."

Once more:—Some there are in the world who think that they have cause for glorying even before God. I allude to the self-righteous; who because they have not been such great sinners as some others, having never committed any gross acts of wickedness, and having conformed, like the Pharisees of old, to certain externals of piety, refuse to rely for the salvation of their souls simply and entirely

entirely on the great work which Jesus finished on the cross. Oh that such would ever remember the Apostle's words already quoted,

"Who maketh thee to differ from another?"

Ah, brethren! what excellence has any man beyond his neighbour that was not given him from above? What good action did we ever perform, that God did not incline us to perform? What bad action did we shun, that we were not warned of God to shun? All is

of *grace*; justly therefore did a good man of old say, when he saw a criminal going to the place of execution, '*That had been my*

'lot, but for the grace of God.' Recollect,

brethren, our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee, who ap-

proached God in this self-glorying language,

"God I thank thee that I am not as other

"men are," was not graciously accepted;

but the Publican, "who dared not so much

"as lift up his eyes toward heaven, but smote

"upon his breast, saying, God be merciful

"to me a sinner, went down to his house

"justified rather than the other." Brethren,

as no man can be justified by his own right-

eousness, however excellent his character in

the world, no man can glory before God, on

account

account of what he is, or what he is not. But I will conclude this part of my subject with bringing to your recollection St. Paul's words in Ephes. ii. 8, 9, 10. "For by grace
"are ye saved through faith, and that not
"of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of
"works, lest any man should boast. For
"we are his workmanship, created in Christ
"Jesus unto good works, which God hath
"before ordained that we should walk in
"them."

And now, brethren, let me endeavour to shew, That every Christian has the most undoubted right, and the most absolute cause to glory in the cross of Christ.—By the cross of Christ we mean the doctrine of the cross, a reliance for the justification of our souls on the death and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. "The preaching of the cross," says our Apostle, "is to them that perish," that is, to those who are not humbled on the account of sin, and therefore in a perishing state, unto them "the preaching of the cross is foolishness;" but unto us who are happily made sensible of our need of mercy, and who have sought mercy at the foot of the cross, it is the power
of

of God—"the power of God unto salvation." Now the real Christian has the most undoubted right, and the most absolute cause to glory in the cross of Christ, because by the cross, by the doctrine of the cross, by a reliance for the justification of his soul on the death and sacrifice of Jesus, he will be saved. The Apostle gloried in the cross, when he broke forth in the words of our text, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." It was the same as if he had said, 'I glory in the cross, I glory in the doctrine of a crucified Saviour—I boast of the righteousness and the freedom of divine grace.' Brethren, not to glory in the cross of Christ, is not giving to God the honour due unto him; it is not evidencing a grateful heart for his mercies; it is not shewing forth his praise, who bought us with his own blood, and "called us out of darkness into his marvellous light." Oh, men and brethren, imitate St. Paul, whose glorying in the cross no man could stop! Nero himself, that most bitter persecutor, could not stop the Apostle's glorying till he stopt his breath.—Imitate, brethren, I say, St. Paul.

Let

Let it be your language as it was his, "God
" forbid that I should glory, save in the cross
" of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Apostle
had great learning, many desirable advantages, he was moreover a most useful minister of Christ, but he gloried in none of these things. Hear his wise and humble language;
" What things were once gain to me, those
" I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless,
" and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus
" my Lord; for whom I have suffered the
" loss of all things, and do count them but
" dung that I may win Christ, and be found
" in him; not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which
" is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that
" I may know him, and the power of his
" resurrection, and the fellowship of his
" sufferings, being made conformable unto
" his death." Truly this man was a Christian—May we go and do likewise!

But I cannot yet pass to the other part of our subject without observing to you, that as St. Paul gloried in nothing but the cross, and

Q

gloried

gloried greatly in the cross, so it was the fervent desire of his heart, that he might be *kept* in this glorying.—“ God forbid that I
 “ should glory, save in the cross of our Lord
 “ Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”
 Yes, brethren, in these words the Apostle seems to have lifted up his heart to God, and prayed that he never might be suffered to make any thing else the subject of his glorying. Oh lift up your hearts to God as the Apostle did! Let *his* prayer be your prayer: and remember, it is highly important that you make this text the subject of your earnest prayer; for if you ever glory in any thing but the cross; if you begin to glory in yourselves, in your attainments, in your possessions, your privileges, your gifts, or your graces, like the bewitched Galatians, you will rob the Redeemer of the honour due to him; you will detract from the merit and sufficiency of his atonement, and you will be less and less meet to join those ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of his saints, who sing for ever around the throne of God, “ Worthy is
 “ the Lamb that was slain to receive power,
 “ and

“ and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and
“ honour, and glory, and blessing.”

It now remains, brethren, that I endeavour to shew you, how the “ world is crucified “ to us, and we unto the world.” And here I could wish you to recollect the paraphrase on the text before quoted; for in that paraphrase we learn the true meaning of the expression now under consideration. ‘ A real ‘ Christian,’ to return to the passage, ‘ is no ‘ more impressed by the charms of the world, ‘ than any one would be impressed by any thing ‘ which had appeared graceful in the countenance of a crucified person, when he beholds that countenance blackened in the agonies of death; and he is no more affected by the objects round him, than one that is expiring would be struck with any of those prospects which his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he was suspended.’ Well then might St. John say, “ If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” A love of this world, brethren, an improper, an inordinate love, or what we call a love of preference for this world, is incompatible with the character of a *real* Christian. “ If any

"man," saith Jesus, "will be my disciple,
 "let him deny himself, and take up his cross,
 "and follow me. He that loveth father or
 "mother more than me, is not worthy of
 "me."

Friends and brethren, what manner of persons are we according to these views of the christian character? Do we look with a holy indifference upon those things which captivate the hearts of an unthinking multitude? Do we deny ourselves the pleasures of a world which *passeth away*? Do we mortify our members which are upon the earth? Is God, is Christ, the object of our supreme love? Is it the desire of our hearts to love him more? Is it the study of our lives to serve him better? Some, it is to be feared, 'who profess and call themselves Christians,' and whom we should be sorry to pronounce hypocrites, are not thus "crucified to the world." The world has hold of their affections, and "God is not in all their thoughts." But though such persons may not be hypocrites, they may be self-deceivers. Oh that they would seriously consider the Apostle's expressions; *crucified to the world—dead to the world!* In other parts of the sacred writings we meet

with expressions equally strong. We read that Christians are "dead with Christ—dead " to sin, and alive unto God;"—that "the " old man," the corrupt nature, "is cruci- " fied with Christ," and that "the body of " sin is destroyed." Turn to the second chapter of the epistle before us, and observe how the Apostle there expresses himself— "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless " I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; " and the life which I now live in the flesh, " I live by the faith of the Son of God, " who loved me, and gave himself for me." Brethren, if we cannot adopt this language in truth, we are not Christians in truth, and consequently are "living without God in the " world." Who can tell how soon we may be literally dead to the world? Who can tell how soon we may be as indifferent to all the things of time and sense, as the fabric in which we are now assembled? Ah, brethren! death is near to us all! It is therefore the excess of folly to place our affections on things that will not accompany us beyond the grave! But I am speaking I hope to many who ARE "crucified to the world." May the fresh recital of well-known and experienced truths be so blessed, that you may be led to look up

for more grace, that you may live more above the world! And may the preaching of the cross to-day be the happy means of convincing some poor perishing sinner of the error of his way, and converting him from it!—Come you, who have hitherto gloried in some unworthy object—you who have lived without a good hope through grace of being with God in heaven—come and look unto Him who died upon the cross, that sinners might die unto sin, and live unto holiness! In Him there is pardon and plenteous redemption for every one, who, in this “accepted time,” “flees for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them.”

But I must conclude. Let me close then with the words of the sublime poet, who, pointing to the cross, and shewing us Jesus dying for the sins of the world, calls upon us thus:

-
- ‘ survey the wond’rous cure,
 - ‘ And at each step, let higher wonders rise!
 - ‘ Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
 - ‘ Through means, that speak its value infinite!
 - ‘ *A pardon* bought with blood! with blood *divine*!
 - ‘ To man the bleeding cross has promis’d *all*;
 - ‘ The bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace;
 - ‘ Who gave his life, what grace shall he deny?’

SERMON XII.

CHRIST THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND
THE LIFE.

FROM ST. JOHN XIV. 6.

SERMON XII.

CHRIST THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND
THE LIFE.

ST. JOHN XIV. 6.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.

WHILST every part of the sacred writings is highly deserving of our devout attention, those passages which directly point out the way to life everlasting, seem to claim peculiar regard. The present text, brethren, is of this important and interesting kind. A reference to the sacred page will inform us of the occasion on which our blessed Lord uttered it, and fix its real meaning. We read, at the beginning of the chapter, that our Lord being about to return to his own glory, was graciously pleased thus to address his disciples, and assuage the grief which appeared to fill their hearts at the prospect of his departure. "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if
" I go

“ I go and prepare a place for you, I will
 “ come again, and receive you to myself,
 “ that where I am, there ye may be also.”

No address could be better calculated to cheer their drooping spirits. The hope, the certain hope of eternal happiness which our Lord here gave them, together with the assurance that he himself was going to heaven as their forerunner, to prepare and insure a place for them, was abundantly sufficient to comfort them. But our blessed Lord, willing to afford them the utmost consolation, graciously condescends to reason with them, and entering into all their fears and feelings, proceeds to address them thus ; “ And whither I go ye
 “ know, and the way ye know.” As though he had said, ‘ You well know that I am going to the glory of the highest heavens ; and you also know the *way* to the same glory :—you are not uninformed how, and by what means, you are to follow me.’ At this, it seems, they were unhappily led to their frequent thoughts of a temporal kingdom ; for one of them immediately made our Lord this improper reply, “ Lord, we know not whither
 “ thou goest, and how can we know the
 “ way ?”—‘ Lord, thou hast never *particularly*

cularly informed us respecting the place whither thou art going, and how can we possibly know the way thither?" Our text contains our Lord's answer; "Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; "no man cometh unto the Father but by "me."—"Have I not intimated to you that I am going to the Father? Now did you but properly consider this, you would soon perceive that I myself am "the way, and the "truth, and the life," and that no one can come unto the Father but by my means.'—Oh, brethren, what peculiar attention do these words command!—May the hearing ear and the understanding heart be *ours*, while we now consider the words in the order in which they lie before us!

First, then, take notice, That the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of the most high God, here assures us that he is the *Way*; the way to heaven and happiness.—"I am the Way."

A way, in the proper notion of the word, is a certain space by which we pass from one place to another. The Lord Jesus, brethren, is the way from earth to heaven; the way by which we poor sinners can pass from this world

world of sin, misery, and death, to everlasting glory. How delighted is the bewildered traveller, when he espies at the corner of some dreary road a friendly hand-post, pointing out to him the right way, whereby he may escape the dangers and darkness of approaching night, and be brought to a place of rest and refreshment!—And oh how delighted, how charmed ought we to be—we, who have wandered far in the mazes of iniquity, and are in fearful expectation of the dismal and dangerous night of death—I say, how charmed ought we to be, in meeting with a plain direction to heaven! How thankful should we be at finding a directory! With what gratitude should we read such a writing as this before us, “I am the Way!”

Friends and brethren, when the Lord Jesus pronounced this sentence, he gave a clear exposition of that famous prophecy, which stands on record in the three last verses of the 35th chapter of Isaiah; “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called
“The way of holiness; the unclean shall not
“pass over it, but it shall be for those; the
“way-faring men, though fools, shall not
“err

“err therein. No lion shall be there, nor
“any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it
“shall not be found there; but the redeemed
“of the Lord shall walk there. And the
“ransomed of the Lord shall return, and
“come to Zion with songs, and everlasting
“joy upon their heads; they shall obtain
“joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing
“shall flee away.”—I may say to you, brethren, on the reading of this passage, what our blessed Lord said on the reading of another passage from the same book, “This day is
“this scripture fulfilled in your ears:” for this scripture is too magnificent and emphatical to be verified by the return of the Jews from Babylon to their own land; that return was accompanied with many sighs and sorrows: the passage must therefore refer to something beyond that; it is unquestionably to be understood of *gospel* times, of the way to glory, and of the unspeakable happiness of those who are found walking therein.

But methinks some of you may be ready to say, how is the Lord Jesus the way to heaven for us poor sinners? I answer, he is the way, inasmuch as that by his precious death

death upon the cross, 'he made,' as our Church expresses it, 'a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.'—He is the *way*, inasmuch as through the infinite value of his atonement, God is reconciled to his offending creatures. He is the *way* likewise, because by virtue of his obedience unto death, we may be justified and saved. Hear how delightfully St. Paul writes to his christian brethren on this great subject, and how fully he confirms, or rather acknowledges, the truth, namely, that the Lord Jesus is the way to glory through the effusion of his sacred blood; "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,—by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." Trusting in God that I am speaking to many,
who

who through grace are walking in the way, this address will not be unseasonable: and oh may it please God to give us all a deeper sense of our wretched condition as sinners against him, and then we shall be more thankful for the gift of his dear Son—for this way to glory!

Now, secondly, take notice, That the Lord Jesus here assures us that he is the TRUTH—“I am the Way, and the Truth;” that is, say some, *the true Way*.

You need not, I trust, brethren, be informed, that all the rites and ordinances under the Mosaic œconomy, were typical of the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ. St. Paul, in several parts of his writings, calls them “the shadow of good things to come.” In the first verse of his tenth chapter to the Hebrews, he positively declares the invalidity of the Jewish sacrifices to atone for sin—“For
“the law having a shadow of good things to
“come, and not the very image of the things,
“can never with those sacrifices which they
“offered year by year continually make the
“comers thereunto perfect.” Now they were
the

the shadow; but where are we to look for the substance? Jesus answers that question, and saith, "I am the *Truth*.—I am the *substance* pointed out by those *shadows*—I am the *reality* of all those *images*—I am the accomplishment of all those signs—I am He who was typified and pointed out by all the Mosaical rites and ceremonies—I am therefore the true way to everlasting happiness—I am the *Truth*."

Men and brethren, nothing but that veil which still remains upon the hearts of the Jews could have hindered them from discerning the end of their rites and ceremonies, and cordially subscribing to this declaration of Christ Jesus, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Oh! suffer me to ask, whether, while we have set aside jewish rites and ceremonies, as having had their accomplishment in Christ Jesus, we are observing christian rites and ceremonies in a truly christian manner? Do we consider them as the commands of our Lord, and are we performing or observing them from a principle of love? Sirs, if we are placing our dependence on the observance of any christian rite,

we

we are absolutely counteracting its intention; we are virtually neglecting the *true* way. The believing Jews, of whom we read in the 11th chapter to the Hebrews, offered their sacrifices, and went through all their ceremonies, with an eye and a heart towards the promised and typified Messiah. I can hardly suppose that any of them believed that the blood of bulls or of goats could put away sin. Now, men and brethren, in *our* observance of christian ordinances, we should have our eyes and our hearts towards that Jesus, who enjoined these ordinances, and who, being the substance of all the Mosaic shadows, is the *true* way to heaven. We are to do all things commanded us, and after we have done all we are to say, "Lord, we are unprofitable servants." Our hope of happiness is to be placed on the merit and efficacy of his great atonement.

Now, thirdly, brethren, take notice, That the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of the Father, here assures us that he is the *Life*; that is, he is the true way to life eternal—"I am the "Life." In many parts of the sacred writings our blessed Lord is described as *the Life*, and as he that should give eternal life to all

R

his

his sincere disciples. But I know not whether we can find a more clear or a more pleasing illustration of the passage before us, than that which we find in the 25th verse of the 11th chapter of the Gospel of St. John; "Jesus saith unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." I need not bring forward any other passage of holy writ. By nature, you know, (at least I hope you do, for if you know not this, I am obliged to say, that you know nothing as you ought to know it)—by nature, you know, that we are all in a state of *death*; "dead in trespasses and sins," as St. Paul expresses it. But the Lord Jesus, he is the Life—the true way for us to life eternal. By him we partake of a three-fold life; he is the life of *justification*, the life of *sanctification*, and the life of *glory*, to the sons and daughters of Adam.

The life of *justification*. When Adam sinned, there was a sentence of death pronounced against him, and that sentence passed upon his whole posterity. When a sentence of death is passed, the persons upon whom it is passed are accounted dead by the law. Now
Christ

Christ Jesus, by dying for us, hath reversed that sentence; hath removed from us the death which otherwise we must have suffered. See Col. ii. 13. "You being dead in your
" sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh,
" hath he quickened together with him,
" having forgiven you all trespasses." Observe, "He hath quickened you and forgiven
" you:"—from children of *death*, we become children of life, through the great atonement.

Secondly, Christ Jesus is the life of *sanctification* to us. He not only justifies us by the virtue of his atoning blood; raises us from the grave of *condemnation*, but likewise from the grave of *corruption*; and this he does by the grace of the divine Spirit. And here we may take occasion to remark, that they who are not quickened, or made alive, to every thing that is holy, just, and good, are not to be considered as "having received the atonement," as St. Paul expresses himself. They are Christians but in name; for, as the same Apostle declares in the 5th verse of the 8th chapter of his epistle to the Romans, "They
" that are after the flesh, do mind the things
" of

R 2

“ of the flesh ; but they that are after the
 “ Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”

Lastly, Christ Jesus is the life of *glory*:
 he is the true way to glory, as I have already
 remarked.

The words of St. John, in the 11th and
 12th verses of the 5th chapter of his first
 epistle, are express to this particular ; “ And
 “ this is the record that God hath given to
 “ us, eternal life ; and this life is in his Son.
 “ He that hath the Son, hath life ; and he
 “ that hath not the Son, hath not life.”—
 “ He that hath the Son, hath life :”—he that
 is a faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus, is an
 heir to eternal life ; and as assuredly as the
 Lord Jesus is in glory, so certainly will his
 faithful people be with him, that they may
 BEHOLD his glory, and partake of his glory.
 Oh, brethren, you who now may be going
 on your way weeping, bearing good seed, you
 shall doubtless enter into the joy of your Lord ;
 you shall ever be with the Lord !

We come now to the conclusion of our
 text, where we have this positive assertion of
 our

our Lord, "No man cometh unto the Father
" but by me." And here, brethren, we may
learn, that as Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of
the Father, is the *way*, the *true* way to life
everlasting, so he is the *only* way. A way,
I have already said, in the proper notion of
the word, is a certain space by which we can
pass from one place to another. Now to
many places there are *several* ways; we may
take *this* way, or *that* way, or a third way,
and by either of them we may arrive at the
wished-for place; but to heaven there is only
ONE way: it is only by the mediation of
Christ Jesus that we can come to the Father—
"No man cometh unto the Father but by
" me."

Men and brethren, we cannot name a truth
of greater importance than this: and while it
is the business of God's ministering servants
to preach Jesus Christ, it is assuredly their
duty to endeavour to convince their hearers,
that none but Jesus can save them from the
wrath to come. If we turn to the 4th chapter
of the Acts, we shall there perceive how man-
fully St. Peter declared the important doctrine,
when the rulers of the Jews interrogated him

and his fellow apostles concerning the cure of a certain impotent man. "If we this day," says he, "be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." May Almighty God convince us more of this truth, that with greater earnestness, and greater gratitude, we may fly to the hope set before us, and persevere in the way!—No man can come unto the Father but by me." Vain indeed the attempt of coming to the Father another way! The Lord Jesus positively declared this truth with his own sacred lips. He taught it plainly in many other of his divine discourses. It is finely illustrated in his parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, recorded in the 18th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel.

Gospel.—“ Two men went up into the temple
“ to pray ; the one a Pharisee, the other a
“ Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed
“ thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that
“ I am not as other men are, extortioners,
“ unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican.
“ I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of
“ all that I possess. And the Publican, stand-
“ ing afar off, would not lift up so much as
“ his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his
“ breast, saying, God be merciful to me a
“ sinner. I tell you, This man went down
“ to his house justified rather than the other :
“ for every one that exalteth himself shall be
“ abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall
“ be exalted.” We must humble ourselves
low at the foot of the cross ; we must re-
nounce all our own righteousness in point of
merit ; we must come to the Father in the
temper and spirit of the Publican ; relying
wholly and solely upon the finished salvation
of Christ Jesus, or we shall not be accepted,
justified, glorified.

Having thus, brethren, considered this text
in the order in which it lies before us, I have
only to add a few words by way of applica-

tion. And the application which I would make, I would make to your hearts and consciences. This is indeed the work of God; yet, as God is pleased to act by means, we need not doubt of success in the use of them.

Let me ask you, brethren, (and for your soul's sake determine the important point)—let me ask you, Are you among the happy few, who have found and are walking in the narrow way which leadeth unto life? To *hear* concerning the right way, and indeed to acknowledge it to be the only way, will avail nothing, unless (through grace) we are *pursuing* it. What say our hearts? What say our lives? Are our affections placed on those things that are above? Is the Lord the Redeemer the “chief among ten thousand to us?” Do we love him with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength? Do our lives witness that we have been with him; been in communion with him; been in his banqueting house, where his banner over his people is love? I do hope that among you there are many who can satisfactorily reply to such interrogatories. Oh, brethren, “for you to live is “Christ, and to die is gain!” You have,
even

even in this world, free access to God. You can *now* go to the Father, as to *your* Father. You can draw near with full assurance of faith; making known all your wants, and receiving grace for grace. This happiness was well called by one of old, '*Glory in the bud:*' and so sure as it is budded, will it bloom forth and blossom to all eternity. "Blessed are the people that are in such a case; yea, happy are the people whose God is the Lord." You, brethren, who cannot answer these questions—you, alas! are living without hope and without God. Oh may you hear, to a good purpose, our Lord's words—"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me!" And that none may despair, let me remind you, that "he is able" and willing "to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him; seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

even in this world, free grace to God. You
 can run go to the Father, as to your Father.
 You can draw near with full assurance of
 faith; and you know all your wants, and
 receiving grace for grace. This happiness
 was well called by one of our old. "Glorious
 liberty, and holiness as in Paradise, will it
 be soon found and blessed as all eternally."
 Blessed are the people that are in such a
 state; yes, happy are the people whose God
 is the Lord. "You, priest, who cannot
 answer these questions—your sins! are living
 without hope and without God. Oh may you
 hear, to a good purpose, our Lord's words—
 "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life."
 "no man cometh unto the Father but by
 me." And that none may despair, let me
 remind you that "he is able" and willing
 "to save to the uttermost, all that come unto
 God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to
 make intercession for them."

SERMON XIII.

**THE
MANIFESTATION
OF
CHRIST TO THE GENTILES.**

FROM ST. MATT. II. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11.

SERMON XIII.

THE
MANIFESTATION

OF
CHRIST TO THE GENTILES

FROM ST. MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.

ST. MATT. II. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.—And lo! the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

WHEN the angel of the Lord surprised the shepherds who were watching over their flocks by night, in order to announce the birth of Christ, he said unto them, "Fear not; for behold, I bring you good
" tidings

“ tidings of great joy, which shall be to all
“ people;” that is, both to Jews and Gen-
tiles. For if we look into the promises which
God made to our forefathers, we shall find
that the glad tidings of salvation by the Mes-
siah were to be preached to *all* nations—“ In
“ thee,” saith God to Abram, Gen. xii. 3.
“ in thee shall all the families of the earth
“ be blessed.”—“ As the earth bringeth forth
“ her bud,” saith God by the mouth of his
prophet Isaiah, chap. lxi. 11. “ and as the
“ garden causeth the things that are sown in
“ it to spring forth, so the Lord God will
“ cause righteousness and praise to spring
“ forth before all the nations.” And in chap.
xlii. 6. he is represented as thus addressing
himself to the Messiah; “ I the Lord have
“ called thee in righteousness, and will hold
“ thine hand, and will keep thee, and give
“ thee for a covenant of the people, for a
“ light of the Gentiles.” And again, by the
mouth of his prophet Malachi, chap. i. 11.
“ From the rising of the sun, even to the
“ going down of the same, my name shall
“ be great among the Gentiles: and in every
“ place incense shall be offered unto my name,
“ and a pure offering; for my name shall be
“ great

“ great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord
“ of hosts.” Accordingly, we learn that our
blessed Lord thus commissioned his Apostles,
“ Go ye into all the world, and preach the
“ Gospel to every creature,” St. Mark xvi.
15. True, the Jews were to have the word
of salvation first; and till the Gospel had been
preached to them, the Apostles were ordered
not to go among the Gentiles; “ Unto you
“ first,” saith St. Peter to them in one of his
sermons, “ unto you first, God having raised
“ up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in
“ turning away every one of you from his ini-
“ quities,” Acts iii. 26. But no sooner had
the Gospel been preached to the nation of the
Jews, than the Apostles were commanded to
“ go and teach all nations;” and I would
observe, not only because the Jews, for the
most part, rejected the Gospel, but because
it was the eternal purpose of God, and his
antient promise, again and again confirmed,
that both Jews and Gentiles should have equal
access to the privileges of the church of Christ,
agreeable to the just notions which Simeon en-
tertained, when he joyfully exclaimed, “ Mine
“ eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou
“ hast prepared before the face of all people;
“ a light

" a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the
 " glory of thy people Israel," Luke ii. 30,
 31, 32.

Now that Jesus was born for the salvation of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and that the Gospel was not preached to the Gentiles merely because the Jews, for the most part, rejected it, but because it was God's purpose and promise, we have a decisive proof in the memorable circumstance which is recorded in our text; where we learn, that soon after the birth of Jesus, the Lord, who sent his *angel* to publish the glad tidings to the Jews, sent his *star* to give notice of them to the Gentiles. And as this is the day on which our Church commemorates the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, it cannot but be a seasonable employment for us to review so very memorable a circumstance in the dispensation of God's grace, and then to point out some of the useful lessons which we may and ought to learn from it.

learn

" Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem
 " of Judea, in the days of Herod the king,
 " behold, there came wise men from the east

“to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is
 “born King of the Jews? for we have seen
 “his star in the east, and are come to wor-
 “ship him.”—Many have been the con-
jectures respecting the characters here called
wise men; but it is impossible to determine
 on a point concerning which the Scripture
 is silent; we can fairly infer no more than
 that they were men of erudition, and that they
 were probably acquainted with astrology, for
 it is not likely that an extraordinary star should
 have been so discovered by other men. God
 indeed can make the most improbable things
 take place; but when we consider that the
 men to whom he sent his angel were shep-
 herds, we are ready to conclude that the wise
 men, to whom he sent his star, were men ac-
 quainted with astrology: not but that they
 must have been favoured with some special
 revelation, or they could not have known that
 the extraordinary star indicated the birth of
 the Messiah; and especially in so certain and
 clear a manner, as to hurry them instantly to
 the metropolis of Judea to enquire the place
 of his birth, in order that they might find
 and worship him. We are informed by
 learned writers, that particular stars were
 S considered

(guesses
 or
 opinions
 about)

study of the stars
 ve

considered by the Gentiles as omens that infants born at the time of their appearing should arrive to great distinction: and some are of opinion, that the star of which we are speaking, making its appearance at the time when there was a general expectation of an universal monarch, and when the Jews particularly expected the Messiah's coming, (which expectation of theirs must have been known to the neighbouring nations)—some, I say, are of opinion, that these circumstances led the wise men to conclude on the nature and mission of *this* star. These things might indeed have led the Magi to some conclusions, but not to such just and exact conclusions without a special revelation. Dare we here conjecture? we might say, perhaps a voice from heaven sounded, 'Unto you, Gentiles, is born a Saviour!'

It appears, however, from the context, that the enquiries of the wise men soon reached the court of Herod, who was greatly disconcerted on hearing of the Messiah's birth; for he was of the general opinion, that the Messiah's kingdom was to be of this world; and expecting that he himself should quickly be dethroned,

dethroned, he eagerly demanded of the priests and scribes where Christ should be born, in order, in the first place, to send away the Magi to see if Christ was there; and, in the second place, to publish that most horrid edict, of which we read in the 16th verse of this chapter. He had no sooner obtained his information than he privately assembled the wise men, enquired of them the exact time when they saw the star, directed them to Bethlehem, charged them to make strict search after the child, and then to return and acquaint him with all the circumstances, pretending that if the child was there, he would go and worship him also. The Magi no sooner heard the king, than they departed for Bethlehem; and, as the Evangelist continues his narration, "And lo! the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

The second appearance of the star to the wise men (which, we are told, greatly rejoiced them) no doubt confirmed them in the truth of what Herod had said, that Bethlehem was the place of Christ's nativity, and greatly strengthened their faith in the revelation with which God had favoured them; and especially as it went before them all the way to Judea, and then made a sudden stop. And we cannot but suppose they were fully satisfied that Jesus was the Christ, when they found that the star stopped over the very house where Jesus was!—this is clear from their falling down and worshipping him. I would observe, this is certainly to be understood of a divine worship which they paid to Christ as the Saviour of the world. True, it was customary for the people of the east to fall down before their princes, and to pay them what we call a *civil* worship: but in Jesus they could see no marks of an earthly prince; there was no appearance of royal state about him; he had not where to lay his head. Besides, there can remain no doubt but in the revelation with which they had been favoured, they had been acquainted with the nature of the new-born King—" they fell down and
4 " worshipped

“ worshipped him,” saith the Evangelist. So early was it, brethren, that God began to shew
“ He so loved the world,”—not merely the little spot of Judea, but all the nations of the world,—“ that he gave his only begotten
“ Son, that whosoever”—“ whether Jew
“ or Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond or
“ free,”—“ that whosoever believed in him
“ might not perish, but have everlasting
“ life,” John iii. 16.

But there is another thing to be noticed in the conduct of the wise men of the east towards Jesus, and that is, their opening their treasures, and presenting unto him the most valuable productions of their country. Now as it was customary for the people of the east to fall down before their earthly princes, and pay them a civil worship; it was also customary for them to come before their princes with the choicest presents: but as it is clear the wise men fell down before Christ, and worshipped him as the Saviour of the world, it is clear their offerings were made upon the same account, and by these offerings they acknowledged him for their King and their God. Respecting the nature of the things
S 3 which

which they offered, no more can be safely said than that they were the choicest things of the east. Some think that they offered him *gold*, as to a king, whose kingdom would have no end; *frankincense*, as to a high priest, who was to atone for sin by the sacrifice of himself; and *myrrh*, as to one who was to be laid in the grave. But these and such like conjectures are only the effects of a fruitful fancy, and of a lively imagination; the utmost that can be admitted is, that the Providence of God might order these presents as means for the sustenance of Jesus, and Mary, and Joseph, in that exile which they were soon to endure.

I come now to point out some of the useful lessons which we may learn from this portion of holy writ, which so seasonably engages our attention. The lessons are four.

The first is, That we cannot strictly be said to be *wise*, unless we are “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

The characters of whom we here read are called *wise*, on account of their great natural under-

understanding, and probably on account of their acquaintance with astrology. But what had been all such wisdom to them, had they remained ignorant of the way of salvation? They could not have been called *wise* but in a limited and confined sense. Many are the desirable advantages of natural sagacity, and of a knowledge of the different sciences of the age; but when these things are weighed in the balance against the knowledge of God, they are light as air. Therefore said the Apostle after his conversion to the religion of Jesus, though brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and versed in every thing which the world calls *learning*—"What things were
" gain to me, those I counted loss for
" Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all
" things but loss for the excellency of the
" knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," Phil. iii. 7, 8. Provided we are but possessed of this knowledge, and are "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," (as I hope many of us are) let us above all things prize this wisdom. If others can boast of more worldly knowledge, let us not be uneasy, remembering, "not many wise
" men after the flesh are called," though the

wise men of the east were. If we are equal to many as to human attainments, let us not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, remembering who it is that makes one man in any respect to differ from another ; but let us endeavour to make our knowledge subservient to the promotion and increase of the knowledge of the “ true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.” And, brethren, if any of us are not wise unto salvation, let us hence learn, that though we abound in worldly wisdom, we are no better than fools—“ Thou fool,” saith God to the rich man who neglected eternal concerns, “ this night thy soul is required of thee,” Luke xii. 20. And you recollect the wise man hath apprised us, Prov. xiv. 9. “ Fools make a mock at sin.”

The second lesson which we are hence taught is this—Carefully to attend to all those revelations of himself which God makes to our souls ; and to act up to all those convictions of conscience with which God favours us.

It

It is observable what great attention the wise men paid to the extraordinary star, and to the information which was given them of the Messiah's birth; they instantly hastened to Jerusalem, nor thought a moment on the inconveniences and dangers to which they might there be exposed. It is also observable, how they rejoiced when they saw the star the second time; how they followed it from Jerusalem to Judea, and entered the house over which it rested. It is scarce necessary to remark, this attention to the star brought them into the presence of the child Jesus. Extraordinary revelations, in this day, we have few, if any; but God has plainly revealed himself to us all in his sacred word, and hardly ever do we read it, or hear it, but we are impressed with the importance of its truths;—a voice behind us says, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” When men attend to this revelation which God makes of himself, and act up to their convictions, like the wise men of the east they are brought to the knowledge of Christ; but when they are perpetually crying out, with Felix of old, “Go thy way for this time, when I have a
“ more

“ more convenient season I will send for thee ;” when something of this nature is their language to the minister of God, or to that faithfullest of ministers *conscience*, they live and die without seeing the salvation which God has “ prepared before the face of all people.” Oh let us beware how we go from this ordinance ! Let us not strive to bury every serious reflection in the gaiety or business of the world ! It has been the cry, the mournful cry, of many a one on a dying bed, (and I have repeatedly been ear-witness to it) ‘ Oh that I had attended to the word of life and salvation ! Oh that I had acted up to the convictions of my conscience !’ That you and I may not be forced to cry out thus by and by, let us *now* imitate the wise men of the east: so shall we know God as our God; so shall we live under the smiles of his countenance; so shall we die, to be ever with the Lord.

The third lesson to be learnt here, is,—
That Jesus is the proper object of worship;
and should be worshipped by all who seek salvation in him.

It

It is said of the Magi, that when they saw Jesus "they fell down and worshipped him;" not as an earthly prince, of which there was not one single sign about him; but as the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of the world! We read in the 10th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that when Cornelius (who was also a Gentile) met St. Peter, "he fell down "and worshipped him;" and that Peter, taking hold of him, thus addressed him, "Stand up, I myself also am a man." Now, I am bold to say, had not Jesus been the incarnate God, the wise men would, by some means or other, have been checked in their religious adoration of him. So would Thomas, when he cried out at Christ's appearing to him after his resurrection, St. John xx. 28. "My Lord, and my God." So would Stephen, when he said at his martyrdom, Acts vii. 59. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Nor would St. Paul have been suffered thus to speak of the supreme dignity of our Saviour's person, Philip. ii. 10, 11. "At the "name of Jesus every knee should bow, of "things in heaven, and things in earth, and "things under the earth; and every tongue "should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

I would

I would just observe here, that every text of scripture in which the divinity of our Lord Jesus is asserted, is a proof that he is the proper object of worship, as well as every text where his being worshipped is mentioned. Who but God could do *that* which Jesus did?—make an atonement for sin?—say to the trembling children of Adam, “Man, wo-
 “ man, thy sins are forgiven thee?” But, am I not speaking to the worshippers of Jesus?—to many who are now ready to cry out, in the language of the blessed in heaven, Rev. i. 5, 6. “Unto him that loved us, and washed
 “ us from our sins in his own blood, be glory
 “ and dominion for ever and ever?” I could not, however, refrain from the mention of this lesson; and while it confirms you in the truth, and enables you to be the more “ready
 “ to give an answer to him who asketh you
 “ a reason for the hope that is in you;” may it be the means of convincing any sceptic who may be present, that Jesus was worshipped from his very cradle, and will be worshipped for ever and ever! I cannot but remind you here, that the more frequent and the more fervent your worship is, the more comfortable your souls will be. Nominal Christians know
 nothing

nothing more of worship than that which is confined to the temple; it is the real Christian who is found on his knees in his closet.— God grant that the numbers who assemble here to worship, may not content themselves with assembling here, but may they make their own dwellings houses of prayer and supplication!

The last lesson hence to be learnt is this— That we are to come before God, and to give him our hearts.

The wise men offered the choicest gifts which their country could produce, “gold, “and frankincense, and myrrh;” but had they kept back their hearts, their treasures had been unacceptable. It was indeed the command of God, by his servant Moses, to the Jews, that “none should appear before “him empty; that every one should make “an offering” according to his possessions; as the sacred text expresses it, “according to “the blessing of the Lord his God,” Exod. xvi. 16, 17. But without the heart, all offerings and their offerers were rejected by heaven; and the people were expressly told,
“to

“to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”—“My son, give me thy heart,” was ever the language of God to his creatures. “He is a Jew (saith the Apostle, Rom. ii. 29.) who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” The same may be said of a Christian and of Christianity:—he is a Christian who is one inwardly—Christianity is of the heart; that is its proper seat; and unless it be found there, God will not own, will not acknowledge it. From what we judge of the Magi, they had some, though confused, notions of this kind. Oh let none of us, who know these things, draw near to God with our lips, and make a shew of worship, while our hearts are far from him! Let none of us, who well know that religion is a concern between God and the soul, content ourselves with the form and shell of religion! “Ye are bought with a price,” says St. Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 20.—“ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” It is dreadful to think that any man should suppose God will

will be mocked. What is it but a mockery of God, while we cry out, 'Lord have mercy upon us—Christ have mercy upon us,' and at the same time are harbouring and cherishing every corrupt thought that enters our minds? Oh may we be enabled to give God our hearts!—to pray to him sincerely to 'cleanse the thoughts of them by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name!' Then will all our outward acts of worship, like the offerings of the Magi, be acceptable in his sight; we shall be worshippers in spirit and in truth; and hereafter join the church above, who cease not day and night to praise and adore the Lamb.

I have thus, brethren, gone through this seasonable subject. May the Lord in mercy apply it to your hearts and consciences, and impart unto you such a portion of his grace, that you may savingly learn the important lessons which have been pointed out! May the bright beams of the Morning Star arise in the dark corners of all our hearts, and dissipate those clouds of error and of sin, which bewilder and hinder us in our journey to that
land

272 *The Manifestation of Christ, &c.*

land where we shall see our God even as we are seen, and enjoy his presence for evermore!

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, but one incomprehensible Jehovah, be ascribed equal and everlasting praise. Amen.

SER-

SERMON XIV.

ON THE

NATIVITY.

FROM ST. LUKE II. 1—7.

T

SERMON XIV

NATIVITY

OF THE KING

II

ST. LUKE II. 1—7.

And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David; to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was that while they were there the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

HAVING offered up our united praises and thanksgivings to Almighty God for the unspeakable gift of his dear and only Son; and prayed, that as 'he was at this

‘ time born of a pure virgin, so we being
‘ regenerate, and made the children of God
‘ by adoption and grace, may daily be re-
‘ newed by his Holy Spirit, through the
‘ same our Lord Jesus Christ;’ having united
in these seasonable acts of praise and thank-
giving, of prayer and supplication, it is
highly proper, that, according to the usage
of our Church, we should now employ our
meditations on some portion of Scripture
suited to the joyful occasion of this day’s
solemnity: and where could I have found
one more appropriate than that which has
just been read to you, and which you doubt-
less remember was a part of the second lesson
for this morning’s service.

Before I enter upon my discourse I would
just premise, that I must suppose you ac-
quainted (as I hope and trust many of you
really are) with your great need of such a
Saviour as was as on this day born; and that
I may address you as those who are partakers
of his salvation, (which I also hope and trust
many of you are) otherwise the lessons which
are here read cannot be so well enforced: I
will, however, endeavour so to speak, that,
by

by the divine blessing, all may find it good for them to be in the house of the Lord, celebrating the nativity of our incarnate Redeemer.

In the first chapter of the Gospel by St. Matthew, from the 18th to the 23d verse, we have a plain and circumstantial account of the extraordinary manner in which this divine and wonderful Person came into the world.—“The birth of Jesus Christ,” saith the Evangelist, “was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins.” And in the first chapter of the Gospel now before us, from the 26th to the

33d verse, we have an account of the same nature.—“ The angel Gabriel,” says St. Luke, “ was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” I have read you these passages as prefatory to the words of the text, wherein we are favoured with the circumstances, the time, and the place of Jesus’s birth.—“ And it came to pass in those
“ days

“ days that there went out a decree from
“ Cesar Augustus, that all the world should
“ be taxed. And this taxing was first made
“ when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.
“ And all went to be taxed, every one into
“ his own city. And Joseph also went up
“ from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth,
“ into Judea, unto the city of David, which
“ is called Bethlehem; because he was of the
“ house and lineage of David; to be taxed
“ with Mary his espoused wife, being great
“ with child. And so it was that while they
“ were there the days were accomplished that
“ she should be delivered. And she brought
“ forth her first-born son, and wrapped him
“ in swadling clothes, and laid him in a
“ manger; because there was no room for
“ them in the inn.”

And now, my brethren, let me point out
to you, and endeavour to enforce upon you,
some of the important lessons which this
Scripture contains.

In the first place we may hence learn, (nor
is it at this time an unreasonable lesson for
Christmas Day,) that it is our duty, as Chris-

tians, cheerfully to support the government under which we live, and through means of which we enjoy liberty and peace.

We read, "there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed;" and that "all went to be taxed;" that is, to be enrolled in the court book. Among them Joseph and Mary presented themselves. Certainly Joseph and Mary had not gone, and especially Mary, while she was pregnant with the world's Redeemer, had not this been a conduct to which *all* are in duty bound. Was the holy embryo hurried from Nazareth to Bethlehem to shew subjection to, and willingness to support, government? Surely we are here reading the lesson I am pointing out! Attend to what Jesus said on this subject, after he entered on his public ministry, when he was asked, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cesar, or not?" His language was, "Render unto Cesar the things which be Cesar's." And read the circumstance which is recorded of him by St. Matthew, chap. xvii. ver. 24. to the end.—"When they were come to Capernaum, they that received

“ ceived tribute money came to Peter, and
“ said, Doth not your master pay tribute?
“ He saith, Yes: and when he was come
“ into the house, Jesus prevented him, say-
“ ing, What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom
“ do the kings of the earth take custom or
“ tribute? of their own children, or of stran-
“ gers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers.
“ Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children
“ free. Notwithstanding, lest we should of-
“ fend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an
“ hook, and take up the fish that first cometh
“ up: and when thou hast opened his mouth,
“ thou shalt find a piece of money; that take,
“ and give unto them for me and thee.”

Consider, moreover, the exhortations of his
Apostles on this head.—“ Let every soul,”
says St. Paul, Rom. xiii. 1, 7. “ be subject
“ to the higher powers; for there is no power
“ but of God: the powers that be are ordained
“ of God.—Render therefore to all their dues;
“ tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom,
“ to whom custom; fear, to whom fear;
“ honour, to whom honour.” And reflect
on what is said of those who in this respect
are disobedient, in the second verse of the
same chapter—“ Whosoever therefore resisteth
“ the

“ the power” which is given of God, “ re-
 “ sisteth the ordinance of God; and they
 “ that resist shall receive to themselves dam-
 “ nation.” I will only add what St. Peter
 says, 2d Epist. ii. 9, 10. “ The Lord knoweth
 “ how to reserve the unjust unto the day of
 “ judgment to be punished: but chiefly them
 “ that walk after the flesh in the lust of un-
 “ cleanness, and despise government: pre-
 “ sumptuous are they, self-willed, they are
 “ not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”

Brethren, after all that has been said, and
 after all that can be said to the contrary, go-
 vernment must be supported; and if we are
 not dutiful in this instance, our kingdom must
 soon be divided against itself; and you doubtless
 recollect the words of Christ, “ a kingdom
 “ divided against itself cannot stand.” It is
 granted, that the lighter the taxation, the
 more pleasant it is to the subject: but this,
 as it ever was, must be regulated by necessity;
 and dissatisfaction and disobedience only make
 that necessity the greater, inasmuch as they
 generally end in civil commotions, which
 bring expences upon a nation that cannot be
 discharged for a century; whereas submission

to the ruling powers, and concord and unanimity in supporting government, is the only way to preserve domestic peace, to alleviate our burdens, and eventually remove them. I conclude this particular with my sincere prayers to that God by whom "kings reign, "and princes decree justice," that all the machinations of evil-minded men may be confounded, and that as a nation we may remain to latest ages the admiration of the world!

In the second place, we may learn, from this portion of Scripture,—That the dispensations of God's providence all concur to make good his promises.

If you refer to the 5th chapter of the prophecy of Micah, you will find at the 2d verse these words, which God spake by the mouth of his servant; "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, "though thou be little among the thousands "of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come "forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; "whose goings forth have been from of old, "from everlasting." The person here prophesied of was Jesus, the Saviour; and here it was said Bethlehem should be the place of his birth.

birth. And to this prophecy the chief priests and scribes referred Herod, when, on hearing that Jesus was born, he assembled them together, in order to inquire of them where the place of their Messiah's nativity was to be; see Matt. ii. 4, 5. "When he had gathered
" all the chief priests and scribes of the people
" together, he demanded of them where Christ
" should be born? And they said unto him,
" In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet:" and then the Evangelist introduces that prophecy of Micah I have already quoted. Now of the fulfilment of these words there was no probable sign. Joseph, the reputed father of the child Jesus, (though belonging to the tribe of Judah,) and Mary, his espoused wife, dwelt in Galilee; and Bethlehem was the last place where they would have chosen to reside, owing to their fear of Herod, whose antipathy to the expected Messiah was well known, and who sought his life the instant he heard of him. Besides, Mary was very near the time of her delivery, and not in a situation to move to any place; particularly as she was poor, and obliged to travel on foot. But, though "heaven and
" earth shall pass away," yet not "one word
" of

“ of the Lord shall fail.” He so ordered it, that the Roman emperor (under whose power the Jews were at that time) passed the decree already noticed, and which occasioned Joseph and Mary to repair to Bethlehem, where Mary, her days being accomplished, brought forth the holy child Jesus. All things most undoubtedly are possible with God, and he might by other providences have accomplished his word; but to us this appears the only thing which would have led Mary to Bethlehem at such a time,

Brethren, the doctrine which I would hence enforce upon you, even that the dispensations of God’s providence all concur to make good his promises, is a very comfortable doctrine—a doctrine delivered in many other passages of the Bible—a doctrine corroborated by experience. Let us then bethink ourselves of all the glorious promises which God has made to us in the Son of his love; and, resting satisfied that what he has promised he will assuredly perform, let us in all our doubts and difficulties attentively regard that admonition of St. Paul to the Philippians, chap. iv, 6. “ Be careful for nothing; but in every
“ thing

“ thing by prayer and supplication with
“ thanksgiving, let your requests be made
“ known unto God.” Remember, my friends,
it is a Christian’s duty and a Christian’s happiness to hold faith on the promises, and to plead them at the throne of grace, and not to give up every thing for lost because circumstances seem to make against us. How often has it been found, that respecting our earthly comforts, those things which appeared to us to cross the wishes of our hearts, and counteract what God had encouraged us to hope for, have proved the very means of obtaining them?—“ Joseph is not, and Simeon is
“ not, and ye will take Benjamin also,” said Jacob, and cried out, “ All these things are
“ against me ;” but all these things made in the end for Jacob’s comfort. And “ all
“ things,” brethren, “ work together for good
“ to them that love God, to them who are the
“ called according to his purpose,” Rom. viii. 28. The Apostle says, “ all things,” how contrary soever present appearances may be. Rest satisfied therefore, brethren, that whatsoever God has promised—and if you are true believers he has promised you every thing that is really for your advantage—rest satisfied
that

that every thing shall be fulfilled in its season, and that whilst nothing can prevent, every thing shall forward them. Hear the triumphant language of the Apostle, Rom. viii. 35. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? or distress? or persecution? or famine? or nakedness? or peril? or sword?" And if nothing can separate believers from the love of Christ, they will certainly in the issue find all the providences of God working together for their good, and promoting their happiness and salvation. In the concerns therefore both of time and eternity let us labour to imitate the Father of the Faithful, who, as we read Rom. iv. 18, 20, 21. "against hope believed in hope, and staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." We can never be so happy in this world, as when, through grace, we thus rely on the promises of God; because then, whatever be our condition, we have contentment with it; we consider that "it is the Lord who ordereth all things;" and we reflect, that in his own good time, and in his own

own way, he will fulfil that word in which he has caused our souls to trust. Let us then pray for this grace, this faith, this trust in God; and never let us forget the judgments which diffidence and distrust brought upon the people of Israel. They had been signally favoured of God, who by many miracles and wonders brought them out of Egypt; but when they began to say, as in Psalm lxxviii. 19, 20. "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh for his people?" This so provoked the Lord, that, to shew his power, "he sent quails for them to eat, and in his wrath a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation," ver. 21, 22. The providence of God brought about the fulfilment of the promise that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem, and the providence of God will bring about the fulfilment of all his promises made to us in him; for, saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. i. 20. "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us."

I must

I must content myself with pointing out but one more of the many other important lessons which are contained in the Scripture, and appointed for this day's meditation; and therefore I would observe, in the last place,— That from hence we may learn how to estimate what is usually called high birth, and all the circumstances of worldly grandeur.

Had there been any intrinsic value in high birth, the Messiah would not have been born of the espoused wife of a poor carpenter; some princess of the earth would have been “the highly-favoured of the Lord,” and a palace had received the first smiles of the Redeemer. It was to cast down the fond conceits and the vain imaginations of proud men, and to pour contempt on that which the world so highly prizes, that He “who thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” condescended to “make himself of no reputation, and to take upon him the form of a servant;” submitting, from his very birth, to every thing that was humiliating and degrading, and entering upon his human existence under circumstances uncommonly mean and comfortless.—“She,” saith the text, alluding to the

U

virgin

virgin mother of our divine Redeemer, “ she
“ brought forth her first-born son, and wrap-
“ ped him in swadling clothes, and laid him
“ in a manger ; because there was no room
“ for them in the inn.” An inn was the
highest accommodation Mary hoped for ; for
Judea being thronged on that occasion, and
there being but few who could not purchase
accommodation at a greater price than Joseph,
his espoused wife, notwithstanding her situa-
tion, was forced to take up with a stable.
Well might St. Paul, struck with an holy
admiration of his Saviour’s voluntary humili-
ation, thus address the Corinthian believers,
2d Epist. viii. 9. “ Ye know the grace of our
“ Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was
“ rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,
“ that ye through his poverty might be rich.”
And well may I say to you, with the same
astonishing instance before us—Consider, Chris-
tians, the lowly manner in which your Saviour
was born, and “ if riches increase, set not your
“ heart upon them.” Pride not yourselves on
your fleeting possessions, nor be ashamed to
call the poorest of the flock of Christ your
brother in the Lord ; but rather make your
earthly possessions subservient to the glory of
your

your Redeemer, in the promotion of his Gospel, and the relief of his suffering and afflicted members. For these purposes are they entrusted to your care; and unless they are thus employed, they will pierce you through with many sorrows, and instead of proving to your advantage, they will only be unto you an occasion of falling.—“They that will be rich,” saith the Apostle, 1 Tim. vi. 9. that is, they who pride themselves in riches, take every method to attain them, and will not use them, when possessed, in doing good, “fall into
“temptation, and a snare, and into many
“foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men
“in destruction and perdition.” And suffer me, brethren, to remind you of that awful declaration of our Lord himself, “It is easier
“for a camel to go through the eye of a
“needle, than for a rich man to enter into
“the kingdom of heaven.”

Indeed, brethren, high birth and worldly grandeur, instead of having any intrinsic value attached to them, too often prove most fatally injurious to their possessors, and prevent their seeking after the honour and dignity of the saints and servants of the most high

God. They are weights too heavy for a man who would climb to heaven. Nothing is more true, than that many, as we are taught in the parable of the sower, Luke viii. 14. after hearing the word of God, "go forth, " and are choked with cares and riches, and " pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit " unto perfection." And we should do well to remember the intimation, 1 Cor. i. 26. that "not many wise men after the flesh, not " many mighty, not many noble are called;" whilst we attend to that memorable appeal and observation of St. James, chap. ii. 5. —"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath " not God chosen the poor of this world, " rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom " which he hath promised to them that love " him?" For a proof and illustration of this, take a view of the world! take a view of our religious assemblies!—Are they crowded with the great and wealthy? Alas! the great and wealthy, for the most part, are entangled with their possessions, and by means of them are led captives to sin. Great possessions without great grace are great snares; and it becomes the Christian, whether rich or poor, to learn these and such like lessons from the lowly manner

manner of our Saviour's birth. This ought to lead the opulent Christian to pray that his heart may not be drawn aside from God—that he may not think of himself more highly than he ought to think; and that he may not copy the rich man mentioned in the Gospel, whose riches kept him from following the Redeemer. And, brethren, this will learn the Christian to be “content in whatever state he is, having
“only food and raiment convenient for him.” Indeed, this will teach us all to pray to God to sanctify to us all his dispensations, and to give him thanks for those conveniences and comforts of life which we enjoy, but which his only begotten Son, when he in great humility dwelt amongst us, was destitute of. Ah! brethren, let us at all times remember to what he submitted for our sake and for our salvation—how he humbled himself in his life, and at last “became obedient unto
“death, even the death of the cross;” and let us join the Apostle in his grateful exclamation, “Thanks be unto God for this his
“unspeakable gift!”

Having thus pointed out and endeavoured to enforce upon you, brethren, a few of the

important lessons which this portion of Scripture affords us, let me now express my hope that every Christian present will, for his own comfort, be mindful of the hints which have been given:—I say, for his *own* comfort; because *that* Christian who is most attentive to the lessons taught in the Gospel, may be said to “grow” most “in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord;” and must therefore enjoy the greatest and most intimate communion with the Father of spirits, which is the highest felicity a rational and an immortal creature can possibly attain.

I said, in the commencement of this discourse, that I trusted many of you are really acquainted with your great need of such a Saviour as was as on this day born, and that many of you are partakers of his salvation. This, in God, is my trust; but I must not, I cannot suppose this of you all, and therefore I must not, cannot conclude without a word to those who are still “dead in trespasses and sins.”

Brethren, your unacquaintedness with the things which belong unto your eternal peace,
or

or rather your indifference to them, does not alter the truths of God. You are *sinners*, and unless interested in the salvation which Jesus was born to bestow, you have nothing to expect but condemnation when you shall appear before God, and you know not how soon your souls may be required of you. Now ALL who are interested in Christ's salvation, or, as the Apostle expresses it, *are in Christ*, are *new creatures*. As Christ was born to save sinners, they are born again by his Holy Spirit; are 'regenerated, and made 'God's children by adoption and grace;' are "born," as St. John saith, chap. i. 13. "not "of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor "of the will of man, but of God." And so long as you give no evidence that such birth has taken place in your souls—so long as the immorality of your lives witness this, painful as it is for me, I feel it my duty to tell you, you have neither part or lot in the salvation which Christ was born to bestow. When the great master in Israel went to Jesus by night, to inquire of him concerning the salvation he preached, our Lord's first words to him were, as we read John iii. 3. "Verily, verily, I say "unto thee, Except a man be born again, he

“ cannot see the kingdom of God.” And now you are assembled with the disciples of Jesus, to hear concerning him, it is equally necessary you should be told this, that you may not impose upon and deceive your own souls with an empty profession, and think that because a Saviour was born, salvation is your’s.—

“ This child,” said holy Simeon, Luke ii. 34. after he had embraced the infant Jesus in his withered arms,—“ this child is set for the fall

“ and rising again of many ;” that is, for the *condemnation* of many as well as the *salvation* of many : intimating, that while all who receive him will be saved, all who reject him will perish. If these words make any due impression upon you, they must convince many of you that you are not yet in a state of salvation though a Saviour has been born, but that your condemnation is on that account greater, because you have not believed in him ; since what our Lord said concerning the Jews is alike true of negligent Christians, John xv. 22.

“ If I had not come and spoken unto them, “ they had not had sin ;” that is, their sin would not have been so enormous and aggravated ; “ but now they have no cloke for their “ sin.” My brethren, if this awful declaration

tion of our Lord himself should be the means, through his all-powerful grace, of awakening you to a serious concern for your immortal souls, it will lead you to seek salvation in this accepted time, in this day of salvation. The promise is, "Seek, and ye shall find." Jesus casts out none who come to him—"Look unto me," saith he, "and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Oh may you who are now dead in sin become "alive unto God through Jesus Christ," and have real cause to rejoice that a Saviour was born! And may all who have long been numbered among the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, continue walking in him as they have received him; that whensoever it shall please God to call us out of this world, we may, through the mediation and intercession of his beloved Son, inherit that kingdom which he hath purchased for us with his blood, and for which, he is now, we trust, preparing us by the grace of his Holy Spirit!

non of our Lord himself should be the means
 through his all-powerful grace, of extending
 you to a far more comfortable and joyful
 it will lead you to look salvation in this respect
 time in this day of salvation. The promise is
 "Seek, and ye shall find." Jesus came on earth
 who came to him—"Look unto me," said
 he, "and ye shall find." All the ends of the
 earth. "Oh may you who are now dead
 in sin, having a life who God through Jesus
 "Christ," and have told unto us to rejoice that
 a saviour was born. And may all who have
 long been numbered among the children of
 God by faith in Christ Jesus, continue with
 him as they have received him, that
 whatever a shall be to all us on
 of this world, we may, through the merits
 tion and intercession of his beloved Son, in-
 born that kingdom which he hath purchased
 for us with his blood. And for which, now
 now, we truly treasure, as by the grace of
 his Holy Spirit, we are enabled to do so.

SERMON XV.

THE

INCREDULITY OF ST. THOMAS

RESPECTING

OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION.

FROM ST. JOHN XX. 24, 25.

SERMON XV

INTEGRITY OF ST. THOMAS

OUR LORDS REELECTION

April 10th 1854
From St. John's
The Lord's re-election
is a subject of great
importance to the
Church. It is a subject
which should be
carefully considered
by all who are
interested in the
welfare of the
Church. The Lord's
re-election is a
subject which should
be carefully considered
by all who are
interested in the
welfare of the
Church.

ST. JOHN xx. 24, 25.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

ALTHOUGH the Scriptures have recorded the virtues of Prophets and Apostles for the admiration and imitation of the Church, they have, at the same time, as faithfully recorded their infirmities and frailties, shewing us that “they were men of like passions with others.” Had indeed, brethren, the same memorialists transmitted to posterity only the fidelity of its great and illustrious characters, we had despaired of ever following them in the paths of righteousness; we had said—‘such virtue can never be imitated by us.’ But when we are informed that the greatest and most pious characters

characters occasionally fell into error, infidelity, and disobedience, we naturally conceive that the difference between them and good men in general is not so very particular ; and hence we are led to imbibe an humble hope of becoming, through grace, " followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

We may learn much, brethren, from the infidelity of St. Thomas. Here we discover that the best of men are not always proof against the power of temptation ; and here also we discover that the lapse of the most eminently pious characters are sometimes but short in their duration, and that though they fall, they speedily rise again. And farther we here learn, that when they are risen again, they become more confirmed in the faith, more strong in the ways of God, and more zealous in his service, than they were before. Yes, brethren, we may learn these and many other instructive truths from the incredulity of St. Thomas ; and when we review his restoration to the faith, we behold the great goodness of God in receiving again to grace and favour the repenting backslider, and so derive encourage-

encouragement to form the resolution of the penitent prodigal, Luke xv. 18, 19. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

Whilst therefore you afford me your wonted attention, I will endeavour to forward your best interests by stating to you, first, the infidelity of St. Thomas; and, secondly, his after faithfulness.—Such a plan of instruction is not altogether unseasonable, as the Church still celebrates the Lord's resurrection, which was first doubted and then most cordially believed by this eminent Apostle. May the Spirit of God assist our meditations, preserve us from unbelief, and strengthen and establish our faith in this important doctrine of our religion!

It seems, brethren, that after the death of Jesus St. Thomas was perhaps accidentally absent from his apostolic brethren, and that when the report of their Lord's resurrection had brought the rest of the disciples together, he only was not present. We are informed
of

of the appeal which Jesus condescended to make to their senses at his first interview with them, and of the expressions of his regard towards them, in the verses preceding the text; and in the text itself the absence of Thomas is particularly noticed, as well as the doubts which he expressed concerning this great and important event. I will read to you the Evangelist's narration from the 19th to the end of the 25th verse.—“ The
 “ same day at evening, being the first day of
 “ the week, when the doors were shut where
 “ the disciples were assembled for fear of the
 “ Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst,
 “ and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.
 “ And when he had so said, he shewed unto
 “ them his hands and his side: then were
 “ the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.
 “ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be
 “ unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even
 “ so send I you. And when he had said this,
 “ he breathed on them, and saith unto them,
 “ Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever
 “ sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them;
 “ and whose soever sins ye retain, they are
 “ retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve,
 “ called Didymus, was not with them when
 “ Jesus

“ Jesus came. The other disciples therefore
“ said unto him, We have seen the Lord.
“ But he said unto them, Except I shall see
“ in his hands the print of the nails, and put
“ my finger into the print of the nails, and
“ thrust my hand into his side, I will not
“ believe.”—Infidelity indeed!—And how
must we look upon St. Thomas, and what
must we suppose was the state of his mind
during that period? By disbelieving the re-
surrection of Christ from the dead, he had,
in effect, renounced the primary and funda-
mental principle of the christian religion, and
was in a state the most criminal and the most
dangerous! With the rest of the Apostles
St. Thomas had heard our Lord's declaration,
Luke xviii. 33. that he should be put to death,
and that the third day he should rise again.
On this point, therefore, being sceptical, he
called in question the veracity of Christ, and
in some sort joined with the Jews, who looked
upon him as a deceiver, though he himself
had been one of his chosen disciples, and en-
dowed with those supernatural powers which
their divine Master conferred upon them. Per-
haps the case was this:—he expected that
the resurrection of Christ would be conducted

in the same public manner as his crucifixion had been, and accompanied with some circumstances of peculiar grandeur and general publicity; but being disappointed in these expectations, he would not believe the truth of the important fact.

Brethren, some men seem to think that they may prescribe to God, and appoint him how far he ought to go in a way of evidence for their conviction and conversion.—‘ Let God (say they) display his miraculous power in such and such instances, and to such and such degrees, and we shall then be convinced of the truth of religion—we shall then submit, and bow down at the foot of the cross.’ Oh, brethren, what is this but to impeach the wisdom and the veracity of God, and impiously to assume the office of counsellor and instructor of Him who is all wise and all mighty! Men may endeavour to persuade themselves that they may live with impunity, as if there were no God, and no day of judgment to come, because they want further evidences of those great truths; and that they would live as those who must give account, if they had stronger assurances that there should be a resurrection and a judgment;

ment; and that if they could once be convinced, they should, of necessity, be converted to God. Men under such ideas may endeavour to persuade themselves to live securely in their sins; but, alas! they are very awfully deceiving themselves, and they ought plainly to be told, that by rejecting the evidences which God has already been pleased to afford them, it is more than probable they would remain unconverted, were they indulged with all the additional proofs which they pretend to desire.

Here let me bring to your recollection, brethren, the conversation betwixt the glorified patriarch and the ungodly rich man, agonising under the torments of the bottomless pit, as recorded in the 16th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, ver. 19. to the end of the chapter. After having in vain solicited a mitigation of his own misery, he requests that Lazarus might be sent to his father's house; "for," says he, ver. 28. "I have
" five brethren; that he may testify unto
" them, lest they also come unto this place
" of torment." It should seem, that, after

his impious example, and unaffected by his removal from them, they were at that time living in the free indulgence of their sensual appetites : and he gives it as his opinion, that were they but admonished by a special messenger from the invisible world, whose more than mortal appearance would of itself confirm them in the doctrine of immortality, they would surely repent—" if one went unto them " from the dead," says he, ver. 30. " they " will repent." To which the patriarch, once for all, replies, ver. 31. " If they hear " not Moses and the prophets, neither will " they be persuaded though one rose from " the dead:" thereby giving him, and giving us all, to understand, that if men remain impenitent and unbelieving under the ordinary means of conversion and salvation, they would be just the same, though admonished of these things by a disembodied spirit. • Such a phenomenon might indeed alarm and terrify the senses, but it could not convert the heart ; it might also convince a man of the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, but it would leave him the same worker of iniquity as before.

Recollect

Recollect also, brethren, the memorable interview between the great apostle Paul and Felix, the Roman governor.—“After certain “days,” says the sacred historian, Acts xxiv. 24. to the end, “when Felix came with his “wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent “for Paul, and heard him concerning the “faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of “righteousness, temperance, and judgment “to come, Felix trembled, and answered, “Go thy way for this time; when I have “a convenient season, I will call for thee. “He hoped also that money should have “been given him of Paul that he might loose “him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener, “and communed with him. But after two “years Porcius Festus came into Felix’s “room: and Felix, willing to shew the “Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.”—Had an angel from heaven stood in the Apostle’s place, had an emissary arrayed in celestial radiance preached as the Apostle preached, the convictions of the Roman governor could not have been stronger than they were; but though he believed in a judgment to come, and trembled at the apprehension, he was not converted, and (awful to relate!) went on to

make his condemnation more sure and more dreadful.—A further proof this, that conversion is by no means a necessary consequence of conviction.

Am I speaking to any individual this morning who is living to himself, and not to God; and who is saying, with respect to the resurrection, ‘I will not believe, except I see more to induce me to believe?’ such a man may view himself, and the fearful end that awaits him, in the parabolic representation of the unprofitable servant, St. Luke xix. 20—24.

“ And another came, saying, Lord, behold,
“ here is thy pound, which I have kept laid
“ up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because
“ thou art an austere man; thou takest up
“ that thou layedst not down, and reapest
“ that thou didst not sow. And he saith
“ unto him, Out of thine own mouth will
“ I judge thee, thou wicked servant: thou
“ knewest that I was an austere man, taking
“ up that I laid not down, and reaping that
“ I did not sow. Wherefore then gavest not
“ thou my money into the bank, that at my
“ coming I might have required mine own
“ with usury? And he said unto them that
“ stood

“ stood by, Take from him the pound, and
“ give it to him that hath ten pounds.”

Brethren, if any one is objecting, God is an austere master, expecting to reap from his creatures the fruit of the doctrine of a resurrection where he has not given the necessary proofs and evidences of it, he will be condemned out of his own mouth, because the fact is as notorious as is the creation of the world; and it is for want of another disposition and a better heart—a disposition to search into the evidences, and a heart to believe the word of God—that any one remains doubtful and denying. Good had it been for such a man had he never been born!—good had it been for the *free-thinker* (who, we may observe, is generally a *free-liver*) had he never heard the word of God, and been told, as was St. Thomas, of the resurrection of Jesus!—But I forbear; for though I might enlarge much on the sinfulness of that infidelity in which St. Thomas remained for some days, (and it would be no more than justice to my subject to pursue this topic,) yet as our Lord himself treated the Apostle with uncommon lenity, and even condescended to give him

the evidence he required, here I shall stop, and immediately set the Apostle before you in the more amiable light of a sincere believer and adorer of Jesus.

Brethren, whosoever has seriously studied our Saviour's words and acts, and considered the pointedness with which he was accustomed to correct, reprove, and censure, as he saw occasion, must certainly wonder at the great lenity with which he treated the Apostle; and, in my humble opinion, this tends to confirm the general notion, that St. Thomas was suffered to fall into unbelief, and favoured with particular evidences, (with the evidences of his Lord's resurrection that he required,) in order that we might have the strongest assurance possible, and be left without excuse for refusing our assent. Yes, brethren, such was the condescension of Jesus, that he granted St. Thomas's request in every particular. See ver. 26, 27, 28.—“ And after eight days
 “ again his disciples were within, and Thomas
 “ was with them. Then came Jesus, the
 “ doors being shut, and stood in the midst,
 “ and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith
 “ he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger,
 “ and

“ and behold my hands ; and reach hither
“ thy hand, and thrust it into my side ; and
“ be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas
“ answered and said unto him, My Lord, and
“ my God.”

Now then, brethren, I have to turn your thoughts and direct the eyes of your understanding to a body raised from the earth—a body covered with wounds and blood ! and that body the object of adoration and worship —“ My Lord, and my God,” said Thomas.

You need not, I trust, brethren, to be informed, that the doctrine of immortality is the foundation of all religion.—Now as the doctrine of immortality is the foundation of all religion, so the resurrection of Christ is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity ; and therefore I shall close this discourse with endeavouring to enforce upon you the moral and religious effects resulting from a cordial belief of this important truth ; not forgetting the faithfulness of the once incredulous, but now believing Apostle.

When St. Thomas beheld his risen Master, he repented himself of his former infidelity
respecting

respecting the resurrection of Christ ; and convinced more than ever of his eternal power and godhead, he cries out with holy wonder and humble love, " My Lord, and my God ! "

The residue of his life he devoted to the service of his divine Master, in a faithful discharge of the duties of the apostolic office, and in a patient endurance of the hardships and sufferings therewith connected. For although we do not find any mention made of him afterwards, except in Acts i. 13. where he is spoken of with the other apostles and the rest of the disciples, who were tarrying in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high ; yet we learn from ecclesiastical history that he went into the remoter parts of India, where he zealously preached the Gospel, and at length received the crown of martyrdom.

St. Thomas, believing ' the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come,' lived like a man who was to die, and being raised again, was to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Far be it then from us, brethren, to be contented with holding the doctrine of the resurrection merely as an article

ticle of our creed. Verbal faith is easy and common, and it is often learnt among the first of our school lessons; but actual faith is the work of the divine Spirit, and the grand principle of a Christian's life; for after all that is said about believing, we either do not believe, or we believe in vain, if we do not live in constant preparation for the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. This doctrine St. Paul preached as the immediate consequence and the moral effect of believing; and this he has shewn was the effect of the doctrine upon himself, and upon all true believers, 2 Cor. v. 9, 10. "We labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." And again, ver. 14, 15. "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Oh

Oh brethren ! who is there among us that sufficiently thinks of these things ? Can the ministers of God, your helpers and his subordinate agents in the great work of salvation, be too earnest and importunate in their solicitations, when, like the Apostle, ver. 11. “ knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men ? ” Far be it from me, with respect to many, to speak in doubt of your faith ; nevertheless, brethren, I must stir up your minds by way of remembrance ; and let me earnestly request a wise, and serious, and holy attention to yourselves. Examine your hearts, your tempers, your manners, and your lives, and determine whether they are such as shew that you are waiting for the Lord’s coming. Do you now renounce those sins and vices, those principles and practices which already stand condemned, and are absolutely pronounced damnable in the word of God ? Do you seek to abound in those fruits of righteousness which the same word requires at your hands ? For let us ever remember, that the declaration of God in the Scripture and the sentence of God in the judgment day will be found perfectly to harmonise.—“ I saw,” says the divine Apostle, Rev. xx. 12: “ the

“ the dead, small and great, stand before
“ God; and the books were opened; and
“ another book was opened, which is the
“ book of life: and the dead were judged
“ out of those things which were written in
“ the books according to their works.” Most
solemn therefore is that Collect of our Church,
in which we profess our faith in the second
coming of Jesus Christ, and pray for ‘ grace to
‘ cast off the works of darkness, and put on
‘ the armour of light, that so we may be found
‘ an acceptable people in his fight.’ Most
solemn indeed are these words! but how false,
how absurd, how wicked, to make mention
of *grace* in the form of prayer, if we are not
vigilant, attentive, and sincere in making use
of all the means which are appointed for the
obtaining it! Only recollect what is recorded
concerning the believers of early ages in the
11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews,
whose condition was such as gave occasion
for that just, though concise, definition of
faith, ver. 1. that it is “ the substance of
“ things hoped for, the evidence of things
“ not seen.” What they believed was, as it
were, substantially present before them; and
the heavenly kingdom to which they looked,
wrought

wrought upon them as powerfully as though its radiant gates were open to them.—“ These
 “ (saith the Apostle, ver. 13.) died in faith,
 “ not having received the promises, but having
 “ seen them afar off, and were persuaded of
 “ them, and embraced them, and confessed
 “ that they were strangers and pilgrims on the
 “ earth.” Well therefore might the Apostle
 draw the instructive exhortation which stands
 on record in chapter xii. 1, 2. “ Wherefore
 “ seeing we also are compassed about with
 “ so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay
 “ aside every weight, and the sin which doth
 “ so easily beset us, and let us run with pa-
 “ tience the race that is set before us, look-
 “ ing unto Jesus”—looking unto a risen Sa-
 viour—beholding, with St. Thomas, the raised
 body of Jesus, and as a body “ wounded for
 “ our transgressions, and bruised for our ini-
 “ quities,” Isa. liii. 5.

Brethren, there is no salvation but through
 faith in a risen Saviour; and if I am now
 speaking to any who feel the wounded spirit,
 the broken and contrite heart, oh that they
 may have faith and courage given them
 from above to receive the gracious invitation,
 ver.

ver. 27. "Reach hither thy finger, and be-
"hold my hands; and reach hither thy hand,
"and thrust it into my side; and be not
"faithless, but believing;" that believing
the wounds of Christ to have been received as
well as made for their healing and salvation,
they may thence derive pardon and peace with
God, and find rest unto their souls!

It is also, brethren, necessary to salvation,
that we behold the body of Jesus as the object
of adoration. Thomas, when he saw in his
hands the print of the nails, exclaimed, "My
"Lord, and my God." And this confession
of the godhead of Jesus from the lips of an
Apostle who had been filled with doubts, is
so clear, so positive, and so express, as to con-
firm the doctrine beyond all contradiction.
The construction which some have put upon
the words is too pitiful to be mentioned with
seriousness, and too profane to be admitted
by any but those who accustom themselves
to take the name of God in vain. But whilst
they make it an exclamation of surprise and
astonishment, common sense and the common
meaning of words can make it no other than
an

an invocation. In Jesus, then, let us behold our Saviour, our Redeemer, our holy Lord and God: and oh may we hear to our present and everlasting consolation the words which our Lord addressed to the Apostle on this profession of his faith, ver. 29. "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!" Are we in possession of true faith in a risen Saviour? Do we behold him as our Lord and our God, and as such look for salvation from him? then does that eulogium which Christ pronounced upon another Apostle, Matt. xvi. 17. belong to us, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

We will conclude with the admirable words of our own Church, so suitable to the subject of this discourse.

' Almighty and everliving God, who for the
' more confirmation of the faith didst suffer
' thy holy Apostle Thomas to be doubtful of
' thy Son's resurrection; grant us so perfectly
' and

respecting our Lord's Resurrection. 321

‘ and without all doubt to believe in thy Son
‘ Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight
‘ may never be reprov'd. Hear us, O Lord,
‘ through the same Jesus Christ; to whom
‘ with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all ho-
‘ nour and glory, now and for evermore.
‘ Amen.’

Y

SER-

Refuge our Lord, Refuge

and without all doubt to believe in thy son
Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy light
may never be removed. Hear us O Lord
through the same Jesus Christ, to whom
with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all ho-
nour and glory now and for ever.

Amen.

SERMON XVI.

THE

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

IN CONVINCING OF

SIN, OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND OF
JUDGMENT.

FROM ST. JOHN XVI. 8—11.

SERMON XVII

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A SIN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND OF
JUDGMENT

FROM ST. JOHN XVII. 8-11

ST. JOHN XVI. 8—11.

When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

OUR blessed Lord was graciously pleased in his different discourses with his Apostles, and especially towards the end of his human life, plainly to tell them of the comforts and of the troubles which they might expect when he was ascended to his glory. It was not our Lord's desire that his followers should be unacquainted with their difficulties, much less did he wish them to be ignorant of their privileges, and of the sources from whence they might derive all needful support and consolation. May we, his ministers, hence learn faithfully to declare all that is to be expected from a sincere profession of religion! to shew both the advantages and

disadvantages of professing the faith of Christ crucified, in order that our hearers may either decline every pretension to discipleship, or else become Christians upon principle, and follow their divine Leader with courage and constancy!

By referring to the beginning of the chapter before us, you will learn that our Lord, previous to his departure, had been engaged in a long discourse with his Apostles concerning that opposition from the world which all his real followers might expect to meet with, and concerning the divine succours which would be imparted to them; and you will also perceive how affectionately he addressed them on the painful subject of his departure, assuring them of the expediency thereof in regard to themselves; that is, of their reception of those divine succours, which, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, would be vouchsafed unto them.—“These things,” says he, ver. 1—7. “have I spoken unto you
 “that ye should not be offended. They shall
 “put you out of the synagogues; yea, the
 “time cometh that whosoever killeth you
 “will think that he doeth God service. And
 “these

“ these things will they do unto you, because
“ they have not known the Father, nor me.
• “ But these things have I told you; that when
“ the time shall come, ye may remember that
“ I told you of them, and these things I said
“ not unto you, at the beginning, because I
“ was with you. But now I go my way to
“ him that sent me; and none of you asketh
“ me, Whither goest thou? But because I
“ have said these things unto you, sorrow
“ hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell
“ you the truth; it is expedient for you that
“ I go away: for if I go not away, the
“ Comforter will not come unto you; but if
“ I depart, I will send him unto you.”—

Brethren, the promise was fulfilled as upon
this day, as we were informed in the portion
of Scripture read to you from the commu-
nion-table, Acts ii. 1—4. “ When the day
“ of Pentecost was fully come, they were all
“ with one accord in one place. And sud-
“ denly there came a sound from heaven as
“ of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all
“ the house where they were sitting. And
“ there appeared unto them cloven tongues
“ like as of fire, and it sat upon each of
“ them. And they were all filled with the

“ Holy Ghost.”—I repeat, the promise was fulfilled; and as upon this day the Comforter was sent, agreeable to what is said in the verse preceding our text, “ if I depart, I will send him unto you,” our Lord immediately adding, ver. 8—11. “ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” What words can be more seasonable, and at the same time more generally useful and instructive, than those which I would now recommend to your serious attention and consideration? May that Holy Spirit, who, as upon this day, descended on the Apostles, descend into our hearts, and render this description of his sacred offices and operations of general and sovereign utility!

Friends and brethren, by the ministry of the Apostles, who were, as upon this day, filled with the Holy Ghost, and endowed with the power of working miracles, and speaking with divers kinds of tongues, thousands were

convinced “ of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,” and through the oracles of inspiration which they left behind them. Christianity is the established religion of this happy country. The extraordinary and miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit have indeed long ago ceased ; but his ordinary operations being always necessary for man in his present state of ignorance, weakness, and depravity, are, through God’s great goodness, still vouchsafed to the Christian Church. And as without these operations we are only Christians in name, and not in heart, it is my design, in this discourse, briefly to shew you, how it is that the Spirit of God, by the ministry of the word, does, even at this day, convince men of *sin*, and of *righteousness*, and of *judgment*.—
 “ When He is come,” says our Lord, “ he will reprove (or convince) the world of *sin*.”

Brethren, we are all sinners. This is a truth plainly and positively declared throughout the Scriptures, and our own experience bears too strong a testimony to it ; insomuch, that, to use the awful words of St. John, 1 Epist. i. 10.
 “ if we say that we have not sinned, we make
 “ God

“God a liar, and his word is not in us.” Nevertheless, without the inward operation of the Holy Spirit, we only acknowledge this melancholy truth in a very flight and superficial manner; we acknowledge it without being duly affected with it, and without being led to inquire with all possible seriousness, What we must do to be saved. How many, alas! who are frequent hearers of the word of God, live, in all other respects, like the rest of the world! And whence is this, but because the Spirit of God hath never sent home the word with power to their hearts? May I not say, the Spirit of God, who alone giveth efficacy to the word of the Gospel, hath never been sincerely sought by them? for “God giveth his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.” In the prayers of the Church, indeed, men join in supplication for the aid and inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit; but it is well known that some who seemingly pray that God would ‘cleanse the thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit—that he would, by his Holy Spirit, in all things direct and rule their hearts, and thereby grant them to have a right judgment in all things’—it is well known that

that some who join in these petitions are prone to doubt, and even to deny, the Spirit's influence.

Among the sins of men, that of unbelief stands foremost. Unbelief is at the bottom of all other sins; and when the Spirit of God comes into the sinner's heart, he feels his wretchedness; all his sins stand before him in dreadful order, and especially the sin of unbelief wounds his conscience. It was the great sin of that age in which Christ lived, and of that people to whom he was primarily sent, that he was not received—that he was not believed in;—"He came unto his own," says the Apostle John, chap. i. 11. "and his own received him not." And is not this the great sin of the present age? yea, is it not the great sin of thousands and tens of thousands in our own land? Brethren, all begins here. The sin of unbelief is the cause of all the other sins with which the world abounds. Men could not live in the open violation of the laws and ordinances of the Gospel, did they in deed and in truth believe in Christ. Happy, yea blessed, are ye who are convinced of sin, and especially of the enormous

enormous sin of unbelief, by the light of God's Holy Spirit shining in your hearts! and let me remind all who this day hear me, that the way by which he convinces men of sin, is by shewing them to themselves in the glass of the divine law, and making them sensible how odious a thing sin is, and how justly it exposes the sinner to the wrath and indignation of a pure and holy God! Are you, brethren, convinced of sin? then sin is your abhorrence; you are avoiding and forsaking it, and desiring nothing so much in this world as to be delivered from its guilt, its power, and its punishment; but here you do not forget, nor think lightly of, the sin of unbelief.—“ He shall reprove the world of
“ sin.”

But, secondly, “ When he is come, he will
“ reprove the world of *righteousness*,” says Christ, ver. 10. “ because I go to my Father,
“ and ye see me no more.”

Here, brethren, our blessed Lord gave his Apostles to understand, that when he should ascend to his own glory, and send the Comforter to them, the world would be convinced
that

that he was a truly righteous person, and the person through whose perfect righteousness there was justification for penitent offenders. It is indeed the gracious office of the divine Spirit first to shew us what poor, miserable sinners we are, and then to point us to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Till brought under the sacred influences of the divine Spirit, man is not convinced of his entire need of a better righteousness than his own to justify him before God; but elated with a fond conceit of his moral rectitude, and comparing himself with others whom he thinks less righteous than himself, he is induced to think that he needs nothing more to recommend him to the divine favour. But when led by the Holy Spirit "to the law and to the testimony," his sins are set in order before him, and he is constrained to cry out with Job, chap. xl. 4. "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." And with Isaiah, chap. vi. 5. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

And

And hence he is constrained utterly to renounce his own righteousness, and made willing to submit himself to the righteousness of God, which is by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; professing with the Apostle, Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9. "What things were gain to me, those
 " I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless,
 " and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus
 " my Lord: for whom I have suffered the
 " loss of all things, and do count them but
 " dung that I may win Christ, and be found
 " in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which
 " is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God by faith."

The ascension of our Lord, brethren, is the great argument proper to convince men of this righteousness;—"of righteousness," says he, "because I go to my Father:" as if he had said, 'For an evidence of the truth of my mission, the innocency of my life, and the availableness of my sufferings and death for sinners, and as a proof that I may be relied on for eternal salvation, "I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;" that is, in my
 state

state of humiliation; no more in this world till I come again with great power and glory, at the last day, not to save but to judge the world.

Brethren, I am at a loss in what manner to extol the righteousness on which I rely for the salvation of my soul. Oh how great, how far beyond description, the love of God in sending his Son to be "the propitiation for our sins!" How condescending, how gracious, the adorable Emmanuel, in submitting to the severe conditions on which alone this everlasting righteousness could be brought in! Are there present here any who, by the agency of the divine Spirit, have been given to see their utter unworthiness of the divine favour and acceptance? any who have been led to adopt the supplication of the humble publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" if there be, as I trust there are many such, I have no doubt but the same divine Spirit will so own the present word, that they will this day greatly rejoice in the glorious righteousness of their once crucified but now exalted Redeemer, since both faith itself and the comfort and joy of faith cometh by hearing. Let
me

me then refer you to 1 John ii. 1, 2. and attentively observe, brethren, the comfortable declaration there recorded, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." More comfortable words than these cannot be spoken to awakened and self-condemned penitents; and when applied by that Holy Spirit who indited them, they cheer their drooping spirits, and make their down-cast hearts to rejoice. And let not that unhappy man who doubts and denies the agency of the divine Spirit, because he feels no workings of it within himself,—let him not attempt to assert that this doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ affords encouragement to sin. It is an old argument against the doctrines of grace, that they are inimical to holiness. St. Paul has very ably refuted it throughout the 6th chapter of his epistle to the Romans, and in the latter part of Galatians ii. And it is further and fully refuted by every one who relies on the Redeemer's righteousness according to the Redeemer's own rule; for he has plainly told us,

us, Matt. v. 20. "Except your righteousness-
 " shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes
 " and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into
 " the kingdom of heaven." Yes, brethren,
 and when the sceptic points out a character
 who makes a high profession of religion, and
 boasts of imputed righteousness, living at the
 same time in the ways of sin, all that he
 thereby proves is the truth of that declaration
 of Christ, Matt. xviii. 7. "Woe unto the
 " world because of offences, for it must
 " needs be that offences come;" and oh may
 every false professor observe and tremble at
 what is added, "but woe to that man by
 " whom the offence cometh!"

But, thirdly, when the Spirit is come, he
 will reprove the world of *judgment*—"of
 " judgment (says Christ), because the prince
 " of this world is judged."

Great is the difference among interpreters
 of the sacred writings in what sense the word
judgment is here to be taken. One is of opi-
 nion that our Lord meant to speak of a right
 order of things:—"Satan," says he, "who is
 ' the prince of this world, had made a great
 Z ' disorder

‘ disorder and confusion in the world ; Christ,
‘ having judged him, brought in a reforma-
‘ tion, and restored things to order again.’

Others understand the term as alluding to that
judicial power which Christ obtained on his
ascension to glory, when “ the Lord said to
“ our Lord,” as in Psal. cx. 1. “ sit thou at
“ my right hand, until I make thine enemies
“ thy footstool.” Others again understand it

of that government which Christ exerciseth
over and upon the souls of his people, who
are delivered out of the power of Satan, and
translated into the kingdom of God’s dear
Son. And there are others who understand
it of the judgment of condemnation.—‘ Christ

‘ (say they) designed to tell his Apostles that
‘ the world should be convinced by his Holy
‘ Spirit that they lay in wickedness, and ex-
‘ posed to eternal condemnation, when they
‘ should behold the prince of this world cast
‘ out and overcome.’ I take not upon me to

decide which of these senses is the most pro-
per ; but I hesitate not to say, that the Holy
Spirit, through the ministry of the Gospel,
brings the soul to have a right judgment in
all things. While men are uninfluenced by
the Spirit of God, they are obedient to the

laws

laws of Satan, the prince of this world; they think of little else besides sin and vanity; "What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" are their chiefest and most perpetual inquiries:—but when the Holy Spirit takes up his residence in their hearts, their sentiments, their practices are changed; they are no longer the willing servants of Satan, but they become obedient to the laws of God, and their language is, "Lord, what wouldest thou have us to do?" When the Spirit comes into the heart, he convinces of *judgment*; he gives us (as we pray in our Collect for this festival) 'to have a right judgment in all things;' he guides us into all truth.

The prince of this world, brethren, hath already been judged and condemned; and in the final day of judgment, which is hastening on, all the enemies and opposers of Christ and his Gospel will likewise be judged and condemned. Many, alas! live as if there would be no future judgment; but as certainly as the prince of this world has been judged and condemned, we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. And can you (I

Speak now to the *unthinking*; for where is the congregation whose members are all serious and sober-minded? where is the field of wheat without its tares?)—can you, my brethren, contentedly follow the devices of your own hearts, and live as if you were to live here for ever? Say, are not your hearts often sorrowful in the midst of laughter? and while you are glorying in your shame, and pretending to laugh at the awful sanctions of religion, are you not at times inwardly disquieted, and ready to give the lie to your boasted infidelity? Felix, the Roman governor, could not bear to hear St. Paul's reasoning on judgment to come; and say, Can you bear even the accusations and misgivings of your own consciences? and are you not afraid to hear the voice of truth? But oh it will one day surprise you!—the trump of God will rend the heavens and shake the earth!—small and great will stand before God, and all must receive their irrevocable sentence! That we may have consolation in that solemn day, may the Spirit of God now guide us into all truth, by reproving and convincing us “of sin, and of righteousness, and
“of judgment!”

And

And now, brethren, by way of application, suffer me to ask every individual present, Has that Holy Spirit, which, as upon this day, descended on the Apostles, and endowed them with extraordinary powers for the establishment of Christ's religion in the world—has He, by his divine and powerful energy, reproved and convinced you “of sin, and of “righteousness, and of judgment?” St. Paul says, Rom. viii. 9. “If any man have not the “Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:” whatever professions he may make, or however he may outwardly celebrate this and the other festivals of the christian church, he is not a real Christian, he does not belong to Jesus Christ: “but,” says the same Apostle, ver. 14. “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, “they are the sons of God.” Oh, my dear friends, what abundant reason will you have to remember this day, if the divine Spirit should so accompany the word which hath now been spoken, as to render it effectual to your conviction, conversion, and consolation! if some of you, who came here indifferent about the most important of all concerns, should be seriously impressed with what you have heard, and inclined to call upon that

heavenly Father, who hath promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him! Do any of you, my dear brethren, perceive the approaches of this divine visitant? do you feel a tendernefs and a trembling on your spirits? Oh beware of checking and resisting these salutary impreffions! Talk not of a more convenient feafon, but this very day, this very hour, this very moment, yield to them. In the ftrength of God immediately break off your fins by repentance, and look to the crofs of Chrift for pārdon and forgivenefs. Pray earneftly with the Pfalmift, “ Lord, take not “ thy Holy Spirit from me,” under the fullft conviction that He is the grand agent for the Father and the Son in the great work of correcting and fanctifying all the elect people of God; and remember that without conversion and fanctification there is, there can be, no falvation.

To the Three Persons, in one undivided Godhead, be equal and everlafting praises. Amen.

SERMON XVII.

THE

NATURE AND OBLIGATIONS

OF ABSTAINING FROM

THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL.

FROM I THESS. V. 22.

SERMON XVII

THE APPEARANCE OF BATH

It hardly seems necessary to say that
there will be a resurrection of the
dead to suffer judgment. But I think
it is better to say that the dead will
rise to be judged.

1 THESS. v. 22.

Abstain from all appearance of evil.

THIS, brethren, was among those important duties which St. Paul gave in charge to the Christians at Theffalonica. It stands on record among those important duties which are given in charge to all Christians in all places ; I may affirm, among those important duties, which when they are not duly regarded, render the greatest profession of religion vain and ineffectual. It cannot, therefore, but be a subject worthy of our most serious consideration, especially as numbers, ' who profess and call themselves Christians,' are sadly inattentive to this most solemn admonition of the Apostle, to " abstain from all " appearance of evil."

It hardly seems needful, brethren, here to shew what *evil* is—to prove that Christians are to abstain from evil—or, indeed, to evince how, or in what sense, they can abstain from
it :

it: however, for the full elucidation of our present subject, I would beg leave to say a few words on each of these particulars.

As to what *evil* is, if you turn to the fifth chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians, the 19th and two following verses, you will there find a catalogue of almost all the immoralities which are comprehended under the term *evil*:—"The works of the flesh," saith the Apostle, "are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Here, brethren, you may at once learn what evil is, and you may at the same time learn that Christians are to abstain from evil, for the Apostle adds, "they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It would be easy to bring forward a multitude of Scriptures in confirmation of this truth; but there cannot be the least necessity, since every man is ready to acknowledge, that "he who names the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity," or, in other words, should *abstain*
from

from evil. 'But man,' say you, 'cannot abstain from evil; he is a fallen creature, and his very thoughts, nay, as the Scripture expresses it, "the imagination of his heart is evil from his youth." We bow to the authority which makes this declaration; but nevertheless we assert that man may be brought into that happy, that holy state which St. Paul was in, and be enabled with him to say, Rom. vii. 22. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Yes, brethren, and it is a certain fact that every real Christian is brought into this state; and therefore though he carries about with him a body of sin, yet being not under the law, but under grace, the promise of God is fulfilled in him, and sin has not the dominion over him; so far from it, that, according to St. Paul's admonition to the Philippians, chap. iv. 8. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," these are the prominent features of his character—these are the natural and necessary fruits and effects of saving faith.—Here, then, I cannot but request of my hearers
to

to examine themselves whether they be in the faith. "If any man be in Christ," saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 17. "he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." Ah! brethren, the man who lives and delights in sin, and thinks that the name of a Christian and an attendance on christian ordinances will be an apology for the neglect of christian duties, especially this of abstaining "from all appearance of evil," such a man is deceiving his own soul, since, to every thing in religion that is merely external, what St. Paul says, Rom. ii. 28, 29. is directly applicable, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God:" for, as he adds Gal. vi. 15. "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

We will now enter more fully into our subject, by proving that Christians are not only to abstain from what is directly and manifestly

nifestly evil, but from every thing that tends to it, or that has the appearance of it.

I will first endeavour to shew you, what it is to abstain from the “appearance of evil.”

What evil is, we have briefly mentioned, and we all know. Now the *appearance* of evil must be that which whether it be in itself evil or not, yet has at least the semblance of it, and seems like it; and therefore to abstain from the appearance of evil, is to keep from every thing which favours of evil: I repeat it again—to abstain from the appearance of evil, is to keep from every thing which *favours* of evil. And, Christians, however hard, however unpleasant this rule may be considered by you, it must be admitted, it must be practised. St. Paul would not have laid it down so particularly, had he not been fully persuaded of its great importance as well as of its absolute necessity. Suffer me, then, with all freedom and fidelity, to point out unto you a few of those instances (out of many more which time forbids me to mention) in which you cannot be said to abstain from the appearance of evil; and this will lead me to shew

shew you, in few words, when you may be said to observe this duty.

You cannot, my brethren, be said to abstain from the appearance of evil, when you walk according to the course of this present evil world; that is, when your conduct and conversation, when your prevailing spirit and temper resemble theirs who know not God, but openly avow themselves to be men of the world. It is the command of God, by one who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost to the professors of Christianity in every age, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—"Put off (even) concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind."—"Fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh saints. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks."—"This I say, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind."

Thus

Thus it is that St. Paul, in several of his epistles, addresses believers in the Son of God; and when these addresses are not regarded by them, they cannot be said to abstain from the appearance of evil. And yet how many are there amongst us that make a great profession of religion; yea, how many are there of whom we have some reason to hope favourably, "things that accompany salvation," who have so much levity about them, and appear, on some occasions, so much like the people of the world, that we scarce know how to consider them as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," who are seeking an heavenly inheritance, and giving "all diligence to make their calling and election sure!" Certainly, my brethren, a religious man ought always to carry his religion about with him; that is, he ought to shew it in his whole behaviour; in a word, he ought to be consistent, for *consistence* is the perfection of a character. Let it be found in us, brethren, who call ourselves Christians; let us walk as Christ walked; let our general conduct manifest to all who behold us the belief, and hope, and experience of our hearts. It is not necessary to this that we put on sackcloth, and retire into a monastery;

naftery ; all that is neceffary is, that we ob-
 ferve the unerring rule of the word of God,
 and act in all things “ as becometh faints,”
 or perfons feparated for the fervice of God.

Further, my brethren, you cannot be faid
 to abftain from the appearance of evil, when
 you chufe for the companions of your leifure
 hours thofe that are the fervants of unright-
 eoufnefs, and the haters and revilers of real
 godlinefs ; for, to adopt St. Paul’s reasoning,
 2 Cor. vi. 14. to the end of the chapter,
 “ what fellowship hath righteoufnefs with
 “ unrighteoufnefs ?” faith the Apoftle, “ and
 “ what communion hath light with darknefs ?
 “ And what concord hath Chrift with Belial ?
 “ or what part hath he that believeth with
 “ an infidel ? And what agreement hath the
 “ temple of God with idols ? for ye are the
 “ temple of the living God ; as God hath
 “ faid, I will dwell in them, and walk in
 “ them ; and I will be their God, and they
 “ fhall be my people. Wherefore come ye
 “ out from among them, and be ye feparate,
 “ faith the Lord, and touch not the unclean
 “ thing ; and I will receive you, and will
 “ be a father unto you, and ye fhall be my
 “ fons

“ sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” No Scripture can be more to the point. Most men, it is true, have secular concerns and employments, which necessarily, at times, oblige them to have intercourse with people of the most indifferent characters, and of the worst sentiments respecting religion. This is certainly allowable, because, in many cases, altogether unavoidable ; but when Christians form close alliances, and unnecessarily associate with their Master’s enemies, they cannot be said to abstain from the appearance of evil. It is a true as well as a common saying, ‘ A man is known by his company.’ And you cannot but remember, that instead of allowing his disciples to court the society and cultivate the friendship of the world, our Lord hath pronounced them *blessed* when the world should despise and abandon them, and treat them with every mark of contempt and derision:—

“ Blessed are ye,” says he, Luke vi. 22, 23.
“ when men shall hate you, and when they
“ shall separate you from their company, and
“ shall reproach you, and cast out your name
“ as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice
“ ye in that day, and leap for joy ; for be-

A a

“ hold

“ hold your reward is great in heaven: for
 “ in the like manner did their fathers unto
 “ the prophets.” What, then, can we think
 of ourselves and of our christian profession,
 if instead of regarding this solemn declaration
 of Jesus Christ, and being able to say with
 David, “ I am a companion of all them that
 “ fear God,” it is obvious to those who ob-
 serve us that we chiefly associate with those
 that dishonour and despise him?

We are informed, brethren, Acts vii. 58.
 that at the martyrdom of Stephen, the witnesses
 who had accused him, and whose hands were
 first to be lifted up against him, “ laid down
 “ their clothes at a young man’s feet whose
 “ name was Saul,” who, it should seem, wil-
 lingly took the charge of them, to shew how
 heartily he concurred with them in the execu-
 tion. This was no less a person than he who
 was afterwards constituted the Apostle of the
 Gentiles: and if you look at Acts xxii. 20.
 you will find that in consequence of this tacit
 approbation of their conduct, he considered
 the guilt of this atrocious deed as lying at his
 door—“ When the blood of thy martyr Ste-
 “ phen,” says he, addressing himself to Jesus
 Christ

Christ at his appearance to him in the temple—"when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." So true it is, that the companions of sinners are, in most cases, considered as partakers in their sins, and worthily exposed to their condemnation: how properly, then, may we address you in the words of the Apostle, Ephes. v. 11. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them?"

Again, my brethren, you cannot be said to abstain from the appearance of evil, when you are to be found at the theatre, at the card-table, at balls, and assemblies, and masquerades, and such like places of dissipation, which are the delight of the unthinking multitude. Brethren, it is speaking of these places, and the amusements partaken of by those who frequent them, it is speaking of them as moderately as possible to say, that *they have the appearance of evil*; and I apprehend their most ingenious advocates cannot controvert this. Were it not, indeed, beyond our present subject, and did time allow, I

think I could clearly prove that in these things there is far more than the *appearance* of evil : but this I must pass by, and only intreat you, brethren, to consider for a moment our blessed Lord's description of the character of his faithful followers—" They are not," says he, John xvii. 16. " of the world, even as I am " not of the world." As if our Lord had said, ' They are persons of another spirit and temper, and whose lives are governed by very different principles from the men of this world. Their affections are set upon very different objects; their inclinations and pursuits are directed to very different ends; their joys and sorrows issue from very different sources.' Agreeably with our Lord's description of his faithful followers, the Apostle John gives them this solemn admonition, 1 Epist. ii. 15. " Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if " any man love the world, the love of the " Father is not in him." And St. Paul observes to the Corinthians, 2d Epist. v. 17. that " if any man be in Christ he is a new " creature; old things are passed away, be- " hold, all things are become new."

It is impossible for us, brethren, seriously to consider such Scriptures as these, and really to believe that we are abstaining from the appearance of evil, all the while we are living "according to the course of this present evil world," like those who make no profession of the religion of Jesus Christ. Many, indeed, who bear the christian name, have a variety of excuses to plead for giving into the fashions and follies of the world; and in general they are of the opinion, that if they abstain from the grosser vices of the age, and are not immoderate in the pursuit of their pleasures, there cannot be any great harm attending them. We must leave such to themselves, since as long as the present world is the principal object of their pursuit, they will only affect the things of the world, and eternity will be treated as an unknown state by them; for "where their treasure is, there will their hearts be also." But let all such amongst us as hope we are real Christians, most seriously and constantly regard the advice of the Apostle in our text, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." And if at any time we perceive our earthly and sensual desires revive, and again going out after those things,

which, by the grace of God, we had abandoned ; let us immediately repair to the throne of divine grace, and lift up our hearts to God in some such words as those of David, Psal. cxix. 37. “ Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way :” and again, ver. 133. “ Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”

Finally, my dear brethren, you cannot be said to abstain from the appearance of evil, when any part of your conduct seems to express a disaffection or indifference to any of the divine commands.—Considered in itself it was no evil for the believers at Corinth to eat meat which had been offered in sacrifice to idols ; for, as the Apostle observes, 1 Cor. viii. 4. “ we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one ;” nevertheless St. Paul evidently shews, that because it would, at least to some, have the appearance of evil, therefore it ought not to be done ; it would seem as though they countenanced idolatry. And certainly, brethren, there are many things, which though they cannot be found evil in themselves, yet
we,

we, as Christians, are required to avoid them, on account of that appearance of evil there is in them. It is impossible for me to point out the particular instances of this kind, and indeed nothing but attending circumstances can regulate our conduct respecting them, since that sort of conduct which has the appearance of evil at one time, may at another time have no such appearance. We may, however, lay down this general rule, that in doubtful cases a Christian should never allow himself in any practice, which though to him it might not be attended with any evil consequences, is yet thought evil by others, and proves a stumbling-block in the way of weak believers. This seems to have been precisely the case with regard to eating meat which had been offered in the idol sacrifices; and the Apostle's conduct therein will serve as a direction for our own in most things, which though in themselves indifferent, yet with respect to others may prove of the greatest importance; "for if any man," to quote St. Paul's own words in the four last verses of the chapter before cited, "for if any man see thee which
" hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's
" temple, shall not the conscience of him

“ which is weak be emboldened to eat those
“ things which are offered to idols ; and
“ through thy knowledge shall the weak
“ brother perish for whom Christ died ? But
“ when ye sin so against the brethren, and
“ wound their weak conscience, ye sin against
“ Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my
“ brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while
“ the world standeth, lest I make my brother
“ to offend.” To be regardless of our conduct in all such respects, and determined to please ourselves, though at the hazard even of the salvation of our christian brethren, seems to be a disposition of mind very unbecoming, I had almost said utterly incompatible with the character of a true believer in Jesus, of whom it is said, “ he pleased not himself :” undoubtedly it is a breach of that new commandment of loving one another, which our Lord hath most solemnly enjoined on his disciples, at all times, and under all circumstances ; and if we are chargeable with it, our conduct is expressive of disaffection or indifference, and we cannot be said to “ abstain from the appearance of evil.”

Having

Having pointed out a few of those instances in which you cannot be said to abstain from the appearance of evil, I proceed to shew briefly when you may be said to observe this important and necessary duty.

In general, my christian brethren, you may be said to observe this duty, when you abstain from the improprieties and inconsistencies of conduct I have recapitulated; and when it is the prayer of your hearts and the grand business of your lives to comply with those excellent scripture rules, by which you are directed to walk worthy your holy vocation—to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things—to be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” And in order that you might be enabled thus to walk and to please God, attend to that petition preferred by Jesus Christ, in favour of all his disciples, to his heavenly Father, John xvii. 15. “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world”—not that thou shouldest call them to thyself before they have finished the work which thou
I
hast

hast given them to do—" I pray not that thou
 " shouldest take them out of the world, but
 " that thou shouldest keep them from the
 " evil." And a similar petition our Lord
 hath taught us to make for ourselves in that
 all-comprehensive prayer we perpetually use
 in our public and private devotions, " Deliver
 " us from evil"—deliver us not only from
 actual evil, but from the very appearance of
 it. How vain, then, is our profession of his
 name, if we depart not from iniquity, and
 from every thing which favours of iniquity!

I allow, that to be such Christians as our text
 enjoins us to be, we must frequently *deny our-*
selves; deny ourselves not only of the grosser
 sensualities, but even the indulgence of those
 affections, which though in themselves inno-
 cent and lawful, yet when they become inor-
 dinate are likely to prove snares to our souls,
 and betray ourselves and others into sin. In-
 deed, in one way or other, we must be deny-
 ing ourselves, and taking up our cross daily,
 under the influence of those strict injunctions
 of our Lord, Matt. v. 29, 30. " If thy right
 " eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it
 " from thee; for it is profitable for thee,
 " that

“ that one of thy members should perish, and
“ not that thy whole body should be cast into
“ hell. And if thy right hand offend thee,
“ cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is
“ profitable for thee, that one of thy members
“ should perish, and not that thy whole body
“ should be cast into hell.” Oh, brethren,
consider, I beseech you attentively consider,
the plain and obvious import of these awful
injunctions, and learn the absolute necessity of
keeping a constant guard over your sensual
desires and earthly affections, and, by the
grace of God, habituate yourselves to “ ab-
“ stain from all appearance of evil!” Now
that I may the more effectually persuade you,
through divine assistance, to pursue invariably
this line of conduct, the propriety of which
I think you cannot but be fully convinced,
permit me to close the present discourse with
giving you three of the principal reasons why
it is incumbent on real Christians to “ abstain
“ from all appearance of evil.”

In the first place, Christians should “ ab-
“ stain from all appearance of evil,” because
they thereby bring the greatest glory to God:
“ Ye are bought with a price,” says the
Apostle,

Apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 20. “ therefore glorify
“ God in your body and in your spirit, which
“ are God’s.” Is it possible for a Christian
to glorify his God more than by abstaining
from the *appearance* of evil? Such a conduct
as this, brethren, constrains the irreligious, if
not openly to say, yet secretly to think, the
religion of the Gospel is not a mere system of
theology; it is a transforming system of the
most perfect morals; it influences the be-
liever’s practice, and makes him indeed a
new man. On this account it was that our
Lord so particularly charged his disciples to
set the world an example of that holiness,
which his Gospel, when received into the
heart, produces in the life—“ Let your light,”
said he, Matt. v. 16. “ so shine before men,
“ that they may see your good works, and
“ glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
On this account also it was that the Apostle,
in the verse immediately following our text,
so earnestly prayed that the Thessalonians, to
whom the duty now discoursed of was first
given in charge, might be enabled to attend to
it—“ The very God of peace,” says the bene-
volent Apostle, “ sanctify you wholly; and I
“ pray God your whole spirit, soul and body,
“ be

“ be preserved blameless unto the coming of
“ our Lord Jesus Christ.” Let your hearts
and mine, brethren, be lifted up to the same
God for the same grace, since we have every
encouragement to believe that our application
will not be in vain, the Apostle immediately
adding, “ faithful is he that calleth you, who
“ also will do it.” Yes, God has promised
to hear all the petitions of them that ask in
his Son’s name, and if we wait upon him
he will renew our strength, so that “ whether
“ we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we
“ may do all to the glory of his name.”

Secondly, Christians should “ abstain from
“ all appearance of evil,” because if they do
not, they will certainly bring a disgrace on
the Gospel they profess to have received, and
probably cause those who are weak in the faith
to fall into sin. As to those who make a ridi-
cule of every thing that is serious and sacred,
who despise religion and pour contempt upon
its ordinances, they comparatively do little
harm to any but themselves. It is the pro-
fessor who walks unworthy of his holy voca-
tion, who does the greatest mischief. When
the man who boasts of being a follower of
Christ

Christ and a friend to the Gospel, when he associates with the people of the world, partakes of their pleasures and amusements, and enters into all their designs and purposes, the holy religion of Jesus Christ is traduced and slandered; it is called priestcraft, hypocrisy, and every dishonourable epithet that is affixed to it.—“It needs must be,” saith our Lord, “that offences come, but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh.”

But I said, when Christians do not abstain from the appearance of evil, they probably cause those who are weak in faith to fall into sin. Here I allude to those appearances of evil which are *only* appearances; for there is no Christian, (I mean no real Christian,) however weak in faith, that can possibly think it right to engage in what is absolutely evil itself, even should the greatest professor set an example of it. Here therefore I allude to such appearances of evil, as that would have been in the conduct of the Christians at Corinth had they eat the meat offered to idols; and I would again earnestly recommend to your serious consideration both the advice and the example of him, who could say with the greatest propriety,

priety, "Be ye followers of me, even as I
"also am of Christ." Certainly, it should
be the determination of every Christian to ab-
stain from every conduct, which though law-
ful and innocent in itself, may nevertheless be
a means of leading others of less knowledge
and experience to adopt it, and thereby to
transgress.

Finally, Christians should abstain from the
appearance of evil, because many from the
appearance of evil have stepped into evil itself.
Evil is both deceitful and insinuating, and we
can expect nothing but a fall if we trifle with
it. Peter went to the high priest's hall; there
he was attacked by his master's enemies, and
there he fell. We all in like manner expose
ourselves to strong temptations when we do
not abstain from the *appearance* of evil. When
we mix with the multitude, and give, even
but a little, into their manners, we are in
danger of making shipwreck of our faith.
On this account we cannot walk too circum-
spectly; better to be called *precise*, and *righteous overmuch*, than to hazard the peace and
comfort of our souls.

Once

Once more, then, let me exhort you, and may the exhortation be attended to—"abstain from all appearance of evil." And may that God, 'without whom nothing is strong, 'nothing is holy,' raise in power what has now been sown in weakness, and render his word effectual to all the great and important purposes for which it was given! May it instruct the ignorant, alarm the careless, undeceive the hypocrite, edify the believer, and promote the salvation of us all, through Jesus Christ, our only Mediator, Advocate, and Intercessor!

To whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed equal and everlasting praises. Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

SUMMER AND HARVEST

EMBLEMATICAL OF THE

SEASONS OF GRACE AND SALVATION.

FROM JEREMIAH VIII. 20.

ST. LOUIS

10-11-1941

STATION 66-44 on 245th AVE

06 JUL 1978

There were no further cases of the disease reported in the district during the year.

JEREMIAH viii. 20.

*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and
we are not saved.*

AS every circumstance in life gives birth to some profitable reflection in a serious and observing mind; so every revolving season affords some useful lesson, and instructs us in the highest wisdom, “the wisdom which is from above,” that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation. Through the good Providence of God we again enjoy the glorious seasons of summer and harvest; and that these seasons may not pass by without a beneficial improvement to the health and salvation of our souls, I have directed your attention to the present text—“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”

These words, brethren, were uttered by the Prophet as descriptive of the language of the Jews, when, after having neglected the means of deliverance and safety, they should be led

captive by their enemies; and we may give them this paraphrase, 'The seasons wherein
 ' we might have obtained peace and happiness
 ' are gone for ever, and we are left in the
 ' most miserable situation.' The idea, as no doubt you perceive, is taken from obstinate and imprudent husbandmen, who having neglected the favourable seasons of providing for themselves, their families, and the community, should, on the approach of winter, be constrained to lament their folly and inconsideration—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." No text, brethren, could better help us to improve these seasons of summer and harvest, and I hope, by the assistance of Almighty God, to make some good proof of my ministry, by pointing out to you the spiritual seasons, of which these natural ones are emblematical, and by requesting your serious consideration of two or three very interesting particulars from thence deducible.

First, brethren, let me point out to you the season, of which the present season of harvest is emblematical,

The

The present season of harvest, brethren, which you know is the time of gathering in the corn, is emblematical of the time in which souls are gathered into the kingdom of God. Turn to the 13th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, where stands recorded our Lord's famous parable of the Wheat and the Tares, and take notice of the householder's address to his servants, on being informed by them that there were tares among the wheat, and requesting his permission to pluck them up, "he said, Nay; lest, while ye gather up
" the tares, ye root up also the wheat with
" them. Let both grow together until the
" harvest: and in the time of the harvest I
" will say to the reapers, Gather ye together
" first the tares, and bind them in bundles
" to burn them; but gather the wheat into
" my barn," ver. 29, 30. Our Lord's explication of the parable, given in private at the request of his disciples, we have from verse 37 to 44. "He answered and said unto
" them, He that soweth the good seed, is the
" Son of man; the field is the world; the
" good seed are the children of the kingdom,
" but the tares are the children of the wicked
" one; the enemy that sowed them is the
" devil;

“ devil ; the harvest is the end of the world ;
 “ and the reapers are the angels. As there-
 “ fore the tares are gathered, and burned in
 “ the fire, so shall it be in the end of this
 “ world. The Son of man shall send forth
 “ his angels, and they shall gather out of his
 “ kingdom, all things that offend, and them
 “ which do iniquity ; and shall cast them into
 “ a furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and
 “ gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous
 “ shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of
 “ their Father : who hath ears to hear, let
 “ him hear.”

Hence, brethren, we have the authority of
 Jesus Christ himself for saying that the pre-
 sent season of harvest is emblematical of the
 time in which souls are gathered into the
 kingdom of God ; is emblematical of the great
 and solemn period when God will gather to-
 gether his people from the four corners of
 the earth, and give them the full and eternal
 enjoyment of the glory which he hath ap-
 pointed for them. But, brethren, you are
 not ignorant there is a *present* gathering of
 saints into the kingdom of God—a gathering
 from the evil of the world to the faith and
 obedience

obedience of the Gospel : and I hope you also know that no person whatsoever will be gathered into the kingdom of God's glory in the great day, who is not, in this world, gathered into the kingdom of God's grace.—I say, brethren, there is a *present* gathering of saints into the kingdom of God's grace; and of this season, too, the season of harvest is emblematical; and it is this present gathering of which I would more especially speak.

Brethren, that the season of ~~harvest~~ is also emblematical of the *present* gathering of saints into the kingdom of God—of the gathering of them from the evil of the world to the faith and obedience of the Gospel, that they may afterwards be taken to glory, we will again produce the authority of Jesus Christ, John iv. 35, 36. “ Say not ye, There are yet four
“ months, and then cometh harvest? behold,
“ I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look
“ on the fields; for they are white already
“ to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth
“ wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that
“ reapeth may rejoice together.” These were the words which our Lord addressed to his

376 *Summer and Harvest emblematical of*

disciples, when, in consequence of the report of a Samaritan woman, who had heard and believed on him to the saving of her soul, a great number of people were flocking across the fields towards Jacob's well, on which he had sat down to rest himself after his fatigue in travelling. The sight of them, it is supposed, occasioned him to make the observation, ver. 35. " Say not ye, There are yet
 " four months, and then cometh harvest?
 " behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes,
 " and look on the fields; for they are white
 " already to harvest." As if he had said, It is a common saying among you when you cast the seed into your ground, " In four months we shall have harvest:" I have but just sown the seed of eternal life, and the fields are already white to a spiritual harvest!—Only behold how they are covered with the citizens of Sichem, who are hastening to be gathered into the kingdom of grace!—only behold what a pleasing prospect presents itself of a great spiritual harvest!

I will once more adduce the authority of our divine Lord from Matt. ix. 36, 37, 38.

" When he saw the multitudes, he was moved
 " with

“ with compassion on them, because they
“ fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep
“ having no shepherd. Then saith he unto
“ his disciples, The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few: Pray
“ ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that
“ he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” Who can need to be informed that our Lord was here speaking of the time of gathering saints into the kingdom of God’s grace, and stirring up his disciples to pray that his church might never want those who should be diligent and faithful in the work of the ministry?

It is impossible, brethren, that you can want further proof that the season of harvest is emblematical of that period when, by the preaching of the Gospel, the wandering sheep of Christ are brought into his fold. But, in the second place, let me point out to you the season, of which the present season of *summer* is also emblematical.

This season of summer, you know, is the time in which the industrious and careful husbandman provideth for the dreary winter—the time in which every husbandman is favoured

voured with an opportunity of making such provision. On these accounts summer is emblematical of the day of salvation—of this time of life, in which every wise man makes provision for eternity; in which every one has an opportunity of attending to the things which belong to his everlasting peace.—“Now,” saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. vi. 2. meaning this time of life—“Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” *Now*, brethren, we are favoured with the glorious light of the Gospel; *now* salvation is freely and fully proposed unto us, and every argument made use of which is calculated to prevail with us to receive and obey the truth. We are assured from the infallible word of God, that there is “an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;”—that ‘he made, by his one oblation of himself ‘once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient ‘sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the ‘sins of the whole world;’ and that he lives in heaven, pleading the merit of his blood in behalf of us miserable sinners. We are assured further, that though ‘we have erred and ‘strayed from God’s ways like lost sheep,’ yet we shall not be cast out, if we approach
the

the throne of grace with penitent and believing hearts ; and that we shall receive not only the forgiveness of all our sins, but grace to enable us to “ live soberly, righteously, and godly “ in this present world ;” looking for that blessed hope which is to be brought unto us at the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ. How very emblematical of this time of mercy, of this day of salvation, is the present glorious season ! and oh how diligent ought we to be in “ laying up for ourselves,” during this spiritual summer, “ treasures in heaven !”—Too true, alas ! it is, that as there are improvident husbandmen, who let the season of summer pass without filling their barns and store-houses ; so also there are men who suffer this acceptable time, this day of salvation, to pass by without being improved to those great moral and religious purposes for which they were appointed. Such idlers, such triflers, are directed by Solomon to take a lesson from the industrious ant ; and though I hope that I am speaking to many of an opposite character, yet it may be useful to bring the wise man’s words to our recollection. You will find them Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8. “ Go to the ant,
I “ thou

“ thou sluggard ; consider her ways, and be
 “ wise : which having no guide, overseer, or
 “ ruler, provideth her meat in the summer,
 “ and gathereth her food in the harvest.”

What, brethren, shall the ant, who has nothing but mere natural instinct, embrace the opportunity of providing for herself, that which is afforded her in these seasons ; and shall man, who has “ line upon line, and precept upon precept,” besides reason, and understanding, and conscience, shall he neglect to provide for eternity in this acceptable time, in this day of salvation ?

Having thus pointed out unto you the spiritual seasons, of which the present natural ones of summer and harvest are emblematical, I have now to request your serious and attentive consideration of two or three very interesting particulars from thence deducible.

The first is this,—That as the time of harvest will quickly pass away, and the summer soon be ended ; so the time of gathering souls into the kingdom of God’s grace will terminate, and the day of salvation close.—A
 more

more interesting thought than this cannot possibly occur to your minds, and demands your most serious regard and attention.

My friends and brethren, the mercies which we enjoy this day will cease. There will be a termination of the blessings now bestowed upon a sinful world. The joyful sound of salvation will not for ever gladden the ear. As sure as we are now within these walls, we shall all know what it is to die!—Yes, brethren, and we may venture to affirm, that in the course of about fifty years scarce an individual present will be living!—and how many may very soon be suddenly called away? Then, brethren, farewell, as to us, the harvest and the summer, the glorious seasons which cheer and delight us!—then farewell, as to us, the spiritual seasons, of which these are emblematical!—Others, and many of them yet unborn, perhaps, will occupy our stations in the world and in the church of God!—"Oh that all
" were wise, that they understood this, that
" they would consider their latter end!" Deut. xxxii. 29. Ah! brethren, this world itself will have an end; and that Jesus, who is now seated on a throne of grace, will be seated on
a throne

a throne of judgment, "taking vengeance," as the Apostle awfully expresses it, 2. Theff. i. 8. "on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." St. Peter speaks with the same awful solemnity of this great event; and the inference which he draws from it is so pertinent, that I shall close this part of my discourse with reciting his words from the 10th to the 15th verses of the third chapter of his second epistle—"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: nevertheless, we according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that

“that ye may be found of him in peace,
“without spot and blameless.”

The second particular to which I would direct your serious and attentive consideration is this,—That although we can nearly say when the present time of harvest will pass away, and when the present summer will be ended; yet we cannot tell when the spiritual seasons, of which they are emblematical, will terminate.

Brethren, our Lord himself reminds us, that we know neither the day nor the hour when he will come to call us to our final account. For aught that we can tell the angel of God, as he is represented Rev. x. 5, 6. may very shortly be seen “standing upon the
“sea and upon the earth, and lifting up his
“hand to heaven, swear by him that liveth for
“ever and ever that there shall be time no
“longer.” And should this world continue till the present generation is extinct, or even till a thousand generations besides it shall have finished their course, who can boast of tomorrow? Who can ensure the continuance of life another hour? Who can say that it is safe
for

for them to postpone the concerns of eternity till some more convenient season? Brethren, this is the time in which souls are gathered into the kingdom of God's grace; the time in which poor sinners, by repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, may be saved from the wrath to come, and numbered amongst the children of God and the heirs of glory! neglect it, and this very night the warrant of your condemnation may be sealed for eternity!

Lastly, brethren, I have to request your serious and attentive consideration of that particular to which our text especially directs us; viz.—The wretchedness of those, who, neglecting the spiritual seasons with which we are now favoured, and of which harvest and summer are so truly emblematical, shall be found to adopt language similar to that which the Prophet represents as coming from the lips of the captive Jews, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”—‘Alas! the time of gathering souls into the kingdom of God is now over; the day of salvation is at length come to an end; and though we had a long enjoyment of these seasons,

seasons, and were invited most earnestly and tenderly to avail ourselves of them, yet we neglected and despised our own mercies, and therefore we are not saved.' How wretched must be their condition who shall be forced to take up this language! Surely their condemnation will be much increased by their remembrance of neglected opportunities and means of grace! 'And were we,' will they say, 'were we of the number of those who were favoured with the ministry of the Gospel, in which "Jesus Christ was evidently "set forth crucified among us?" and are we *now* among those who are about to be consigned over to endless perdition, as neglecters of the great salvation and workers of iniquity? Mountains, fall on us! hills, cover us! and hide us "from the face of him that sitteth "upon the throne, and from the Lamb; for "the great day of his wrath is come, and "who shall be able to stand?"

Methinks I see the wretched assembly at the left hand of their most worthy but dreadful Judge eternal, adopting such language as that in our text with all the bitterness of self-reproach and indignation! God forbid, God

forbid, my dear brethren, that at the close of life any of us should be found to exclaim, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" Thanks be to God we are yet upon praying ground! Thanks be to God we are yet under a dispensation of mercy and forbearance! Thanks be to God the spiritual harvest is not passed as to us, the spiritual summer is not ended! Oh may we all have grace to redeem every moment of time that remains, and to buy up, like wise merchants, this invaluable commodity! to lay hold on the hope set before us, and to live the life of faith upon the Son of God! This, brethren, will be a very happy and advantageous improvement of the present glorious seasons of harvest and summer; and no doubt but that the Holy Spirit of God, will, through the ministry of the word, accomplish this desire of my soul in some of you who this day hear me.

I know not, my dear brethren, how to speak as I ought of their blessedness who shall be able at the hour of death and in the day of judgment to reverse the language of our text, and to say, Though "the harvest is past, and
" the

“ the summer is ended, and many are not
“ saved ;” yet, through the abounding grace
of God, it is far otherwise with us. We en-
joyed the seasons of mercy, and to us they
were indeed seasons of salvation. “ God,” to
use the sublime language of his Apostle, 2 Tim.
i. 9. “ hath saved us, and called us with an
“ holy calling ; not according to our works,
“ but according to his own purpose and grace
“ which was given us in Christ Jesus before
“ the world began.” We are saved, and
through the countless ages of eternity we will
ascribe the whole praise and glory of our sal-
vation to “ the Lamb that was slain, and hath
“ redeemed us unto God by his blood.”

Salvation, my dear brethren, includes more
than we can possibly think of ; all our best
and highest thoughts fall short in endeavour-
ing to comprehend it—“ Eye hath not seen,”
says St. Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 9. “ nor ear heard,
“ neither have entered into the heart of man
“ the things that God hath prepared for them
“ that love him.” But may we, in due time,
know it by our own sense and feeling when
we enter into his immediate presence, when

we see him as he is, and know him even as we are known of him!—God grant us all this grace through the mediation of his blessed Son our Saviour!

To whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Three Persons, but one eternal, incomprehensible Jehovah, be ascribed equal and everlasting praises. Amen.

SERMON XIX.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CHARACTER

OF THOSE THAT ARE APPOINTED TO OBTAIN

SALVATION BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

FROM I THESS. V. 9.

SERMON XII.

THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN
AND THE METHOD OF HIS SALVATION
BY THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH
BY THE APOSTLE PAUL
TO THE ROMANS
CHAPTER I.
THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN
AND THE METHOD OF HIS SALVATION
BY THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH
BY THE APOSTLE PAUL
TO THE ROMANS
CHAPTER I.
THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN
AND THE METHOD OF HIS SALVATION
BY THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH
BY THE APOSTLE PAUL
TO THE ROMANS
CHAPTER I.

1 THESS. v. 9.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

I HAVE frequently taken occasion to observe to you, that among the causes of those errors which have gained ground in the world, an improper method of reading the sacred writings is one of them, and one of no small magnitude. By an improper method of reading the sacred writings, I mean a want of attention to the respective contexts, without which the real sense of the passage, in most cases, cannot be discerned. If, for instance, you read such a passage as that which is now before us without due attention to the context, the Apostle's design in it will be miserably frustrated; I say, miserably frustrated; for it will seem to hold forth a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency, it will seem to breathe the very spirit of antinomianism; indeed it will even appear to be language which any man may adopt, and at the same time it will

encourage the sad sentiment prevalent in the world, ' that there is no condemnation to the sons of men, for that God will justify and save all his creatures, however vile, however abandoned, however impious and impenitent.' But when this passage is read in connexion with the context we discover the true import of it, and find that it is language which no one can adopt who is not a faithful and sincere disciple of our Lord Jesus.

By referring to the preceding chapter, you will find that the Apostle had been speaking of the last solemn advent of Jesus Christ, and exhorting believers to comfort one another with the animating thoughts which he had suggested to them. He begins this fifth chapter with a more particular address, further consoling their minds in regard to that grand period, when " the Lord himself shall
 " descend from heaven with a shout, with
 " the voice of the archangel, and with the
 " trump of God."—" But," saith he, ver. 1—5. " of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto
 " you. For yourselves know perfectly that
 " the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief
 " in

“ in the night. For when they shall say,
“ Peace and safety, then sudden destruction
“ cometh upon them, as travail upon a wo-
“ man with child; and they shall not escape.
“ But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that
“ that day should overtake you as a thief.
“ Ye are all the children of light, and the
“ children of the day: we are not of the
“ night, nor of darkness.”

Having thus reminded his fellow-christians of the happiness of their condition, he draws from it an argument to induce them to observe the greatest circumspection in the whole of their conduct.—“ Therefore,” saith he, ver. 6. “ let us not sleep, as do others; but let us “ watch and be sober:” giving it as a reason, ver. 7. “ For they that sleep sleep in the “ night; and they that be drunken are drunken “ in the night:” and then enlarging his exhortation, ver. 8. “ But let us, who are of “ the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate “ of faith and love; and for an helmet, the “ hope of salvation.” The Apostle speaks in the military style to denote the arduous nature of the christian conflict, and the strength and the sufficiency of that defence provided

in the Gospel for all the faithful soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ: and, with a still farther view of animating their faith, hope, and charity, he takes notice in our text of God's gracious design and purpose respecting them, and in effect thus addresses them—

‘ We, who are amongst the faithful followers
‘ of Jesus, may well arm ourselves with these
‘ graces of the Holy Spirit, and especially
‘ with the glorious hope of eternal salvation;
‘ to us there is no condemnation; we are
‘ rescued from everlasting destruction, and
‘ are assured that all will be well with us in
‘ that awful day when fearfulness will sur-
‘ prise the hypocrites, and when all the work-
‘ ers of iniquity will perish from the presence
‘ of the universal Judge; “ for God (saith
“ the Apostle) hath not appointed us to wrath,
“ but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus
“ Christ.”

Having thus taken occasion to shew what I believe in general to be the true sense of this Scripture, again recommending a due attention to every passage in its connexion with what goes before and follows after it, I shall further endeavour to promote your best interests
by

by attending to three observations which the words of our text have suggested to me.

My first observation is this,—That every man and woman born into the world is “appointed unto wrath;” I say, That every man and woman born into the world is “appointed unto wrath.”—This observation, I am well aware, will startle you, and some of you, perhaps, will deem it unjust and uncharitable; but, brethren, as members of the Church of England, we all give our assent to it, confessing in our Catechism that ‘we are by nature born in sin, and children of wrath.’ I mean not to say, that when God in the beginning created man, he created him to be a subject of his wrath: no, brethren, the very reverse of this was the case, Moses having assured us, Gen. i. 31. that after God had created man in his own image, he “saw every thing that he had made,” and man, doubtless, among the rest of his works, “and behold it was very good,” very pleasant in his sight. And man would for ever have been pleasing in the eyes of his Maker, had he not forfeited the divine favour by disobedience—had he not listened to the insinuations
of

of his enemy, and transgressed an express command. Man fell ! fell from the favour of God, and incurred his wrath ; for, saith the Apostle, Rom. v. 12. “ as by one man
“ sin entered into the world, and death by
“ sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for
“ that all have sinned.” Yes, brethren, Adam involved his whole posterity in the fatal consequence of his disobedience ; and every child born into the world, is, as we express in our Catechism, ‘ born in sin, and a child of wrath.’ This, brethren, is what we call *original sin* ; which is declared in the 9th Article of our Church to be ‘ the fault and corruption of
‘ the nature of every man that naturally is
‘ engendered of the offspring of Adam ;
‘ whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature
‘ inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit, and therefore
‘ in every person born into this world it deserves God’s wrath and damnation.’ And without a proper consideration of this doctrine of original sin we can never conceive rightly of man’s misery, or worthily of God’s redeeming love !

And

And does then, methinks you say, does the helpless babe, who scarce lives an hour in the world, and quickly returns to his kindred dust—does he perish for ever beneath the weight of God's indignation? Brethren, the exalted ideas which the Scriptures lead us to entertain of the divine goodness and mercy, forbid us to harbour such a thought. You recollect, that Adam had no sooner deviated from right, than his most merciful Creator, whose justice impelled him to drive the transgressor out of paradise, vouchsafed to give him the gracious promise of a Redeemer—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." And therefore I would argue thus—As every infant born into the world is condemned to wrath on account of the first Adam—is condemned for a sin which he himself was not actually guilty of; so every infant born into the world is redeemed by the second Adam—is redeemed by a righteousness imputed to him; for, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 22. "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This, brethren, while it tends to shew us that the Judge of all the earth will assuredly do right, may assuage our grief for the loss of our dear

survived

urged

dear children, and help us to mourn for them no otherwise than as we mourn for true believers, and not to "sorrow as those which have no hope." When indeed our children are spared to years of maturity, we cannot have any comfortable hope respecting them, unless they have evinced, in their past lives, the effects of a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ: but taken from us in their infant state, we may be assured that all is well; and that although they were born under the sentence of eternal death, as the offspring of Adam, yet the execution of that tremendous sentence is graciously superseded by virtue of the atonement of Christ, and, consequently, that they are "for ever with the Lord."

My second observation is this,—That as every individual person born into the world, is, on account of original sin, "appointed unto wrath," but delivered from the execution of it by the compassionate intervention of the Redeemer, and his substitution in the room and stead of sinners, provided they die in the state of infancy; so if they live to years of maturity, they are "appointed to wrath"

as

as *actual* transgressors, and upon account of *actual* sin.

Indeed, brethren, it is not long before original sin brings forth actual sin; the child waits not till manhood to shew what evil lurks in the human heart; and is it not an incontrovertible fact, that we all afford abundant proof that we were born in sin? Hear St. Paul's testimony to this melancholy truth, Rom. iii. 10—19. “It is written, There is
“ none righteous, no, not one: There is none
“ that understandeth, there is none that seek-
“ eth after God. They are all gone out of
“ the way, they are together become unpro-
“ fitable: there is none that doeth good, no,
“ not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre;
“ with their tongues they have used deceit;
“ the poison of asps is under their lips: whose
“ mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their
“ feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and
“ misery are in their ways: and the way of
“ peace have they not known: there is no
“ fear of God before their eyes.” And observe, at the 19th verse, how universally he applies it: “Now we know that what
“ things soever the law saith, it saith to them
“ who

“ who are under the law ; that every mouth
 “ may be stopped, and all the world may be-
 “ come guilty before God.” And having in the
 three next verses asserted the utter impossibility
 of our being justified by the law, and pointed
 out the righteousness of Christ as the one
 only way of justification before God, the
 Apostle gives this as a reason, ver. 23. “ For
 “ all,” says he, “ all have sinned, and come
 “ short of the glory of God.”

Brethren, it is not with actual as with ori-
 ginal sin ; for whilst the benefits of Christ's
 atonement so far extend to every one con-
 demned for original sin, that no one has the
 sentence of condemnation inflicted on them
 merely on that account ; they can only be
 available, with respect to actual sin, to those
 persons who truly repent, and unfeignedly
 believe the Gospel. The words of the Apostle
 already quoted from 1 Cor. xv. 22. “ As in
 “ Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all
 “ be made alive,” whatever may be their
 exact meaning, cannot, if referred to actual
 sinners, afford consolation to any but such as
 have received Christ in all his offices and cha-
 racters : and I am bold to say, that although
 the

the Lord Jesus made, as our Church expresses it, 'a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world;' yet, "except we repent," we must inevitably perish.

Oh that men were wise! that they would consider this! that they would not satisfy, or rather stupify their minds with general notions of religion, but seriously and impartially "examine themselves whether they be in the faith!" We are all, brethren, "appointed to wrath" as actual transgressors; and till we are brought to feel and lament our wretchedness, and to repent us of our misdoings, saying in truth, that 'the remembrance of our sins is grievous unto us, and the burden of them intolerable;' till then we shall never seek for mercy, pardon, and redemption:—in short, till we really believe that we are "appointed unto wrath" as actual transgressors, we shall not really seek for deliverance, but dream that all is well so long as we profess the faith of Christ, and outwardly conform to the ordinances of his religion.—Brethren, the very first step towards the attaining of the salvation which is in Christ

D d

Jesus,

Jesus, is such a view of ourselves as I have endeavoured to set before you, in order that, by the co-operating grace of God, you might see how deplorable your condition is independent of a Redeemer, and that, at the foot of the cross, you might learn the true and only way of pardon and salvation.

I come now to my last observation, which is this,—That as every person, living to years of maturity, is “appointed unto wrath” on account of actual sin; so all are, or may be, delivered from it by virtue of the atonement of Christ, provided they truly repent and believe the Gospel.

“The blood of Jesus Christ,” saith the Apostle John, 1st Epist. i. 7. “cleanseth us from all sin.” He is speaking, it is evident from the context, of penitent believers, the guilt and punishment of whose original and actual sin are freely and fully remitted by the death of Jesus Christ. This is the ground on which all the promises of God are made to penitent and contrite souls. Hear what he says by Isaiah, chap. i. 18. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though

“ though your sins be as scarlet, they shall
“ be white as snow; though they be red like
“ crimson, they shall be as wool.” Hear
what his beloved Son saith, Matt. xi. 28.
“ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are
“ heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
And again, John iii. 16, 17. “ God so loved
“ the world, that he gave his only begotten
“ Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
“ not perish, but have everlasting life. For
“ God sent not his Son into the world to
“ condemn the world, but that the world
“ through him might be saved.” To every
sinner, therefore, who is blessed with sincere
repentance, and whose language at the foot
of the cross is, “ Lord Jesus, save, or I
“ perish;” to every such sinner we are au-
thorised to address these comfortable words
of Christ our Saviour, and no one is excluded
who seeks for mercy in the way which God
hath appointed.

You recollect, no doubt, the case of the
people in the wilderness who were bitten by
fiery serpents; they were healed by looking
at a serpent made of brass, which was erected
upon a pole in the midst of the camp: and

you cannot forget the admirable use which our Saviour made of this incident, John iii. 14, 15. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Brethren, the serpent in the wilderness was a type of the Lord our Redeemer; and as every wounded Israelite was healed who looked up to the serpent, so every poor penitent, who looks unto Christ by faith, will be healed of the deadly wounds which sin has made in his soul.

Remember our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, recorded by St. Luke, chap. xviii. 10—15. In describing the publican as smiting upon his breast, and saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and in telling us that he "went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee;" what, suppose you, was the intention of our divine Teacher but to shew us, that whilst proud, unhumiliated people, who trust to their own fancied righteousness and despise others, are considered by Him who seeth not as man seeth with disapprobation, and even with abhorrence?

abhorrence? The convinced and self-condemned sinner shall ever find favour and obtain mercy at his hands:—the man who is sensible that, as a sinner, he is both “appointed unto wrath” and justly deserving of the infliction of it, shall know that Jesus hath turned away his Father’s wrath from him, having borne those sins which exposed him to it “in his own body on the tree.”

Remember also our Lord’s parable of the Prodigal Son, as recorded by the same Evangelist, chap. xv. 11. to the end. The prodigal is represented, ver. 17. as coming to himself, as beginning to reason like a poor sinner “appointed unto wrath,” and as saying, ver. 18, 19. “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son:” and the fond father is described as beholding his returning child, when he was yet a great way off, and compassionately running to meet him, falling on his neck, and kissing him, ver. 20.

Brethren, you cannot but perceive the encouragement and consolation which our gracious Lord here designed to administer to every true penitent. Indeed this is the constant and uniform language of God our Saviour to poor, wretched, wandering sinners. Hear how it is expressed by Jeremiah, chap. iii. 21, 22.

“ A voice was heard upon the high places,
 “ weeping and supplications of the children
 “ of Israel : for they have perverted their
 “ way, and they have forgotten the Lord
 “ their God. Return, ye backsliding children,
 “ and I will heal your backslidings :
 “ behold, we come unto thee ; for thou art
 “ the Lord our God.” Yes, I may assure
 you, brethren, that God ever waits to be gracious, and that it is not his will that “ any
 “ should perish, but that all should come to
 “ repentance.” I am warranted, therefore,
 to invite every poor sinner, “ appointed unto
 “ wrath” as a sinner against God, to come
 unto him and sue for mercy. There is, my
 dear brethren, redemption, plenteous redemption
 in the blood of Jesus Christ ; and who-
 soever will may come, (if he comes truly pen-
 nitent and believing,) he may come and ob-
 tain.

tain mercy.—God Almighty give some doubting soul to believe this! It is not improbable but that in this assembly there may be a person hanging down his head and saying, ‘ Alas, there is no hope! I have, I trust, repented of my former sins, and I am now endeavouring, through grace, to “ bring forth “ fruits meet for repentance,” and live to my Maker’s praise; but such is the weakness and corruption of my mortal nature, and so many are my sins and temptations, that I fear and tremble for my future state.’ But lift up thy head, oh poor distressed soul, and look at the compassionate Jesus suffering and dying for thy sins, and fear not, only believe. Can you so dishonour him as to think that his atonement is insufficient? Remember the verse preceding our text, and pray to God to enable you to put on “ for an helmet the hope of “ salvation,” that you may join the sweet declaration of the Apostle, “ God hath not “ appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Brethren, it is for want of more faith that so many refuse to be comforted who have been given to see the error of their ways, and made willing to be saved by the atonement of Christ.

Far be it from me to speak peace to any man who wilfully continues in sin; but to the penitent sinner I would wish to open all the treasures of consolation which flow from the Redeemer's cross, that he may look forward with delight and joy to the second coming of Christ, and knowing and being assured that his complete redemption draweth nigh.

It only remains, brethren, that, by way of application of this discourse, I just exhort you to give earnest heed to the things which you have heard, and to remember that none but penitent believers can adopt the words of our text, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Ah! brethren, the time is hastening on when the great importance of attending to eternal concerns will be owned by all men, and in that day we fear that the word of God will rise up in judgment against some who now appear to attend to it—"I beseech you therefore by the mercies," and "knowing the terrors of the Lord," I would once again exhort you to "examine yourselves whether you are in the faith!" Brethren, does your *daily* conduct in the world agree with
with

with your appearance *here*? Do you read your Bibles and religious books, leaving the novels and nonsense of the day for those who know not God? Does your love towards God evidence itself by a love of his people? Can you say with David, Psal. cxix. 63. "I am
" a companion of all them that fear thee,
" and of them that keep thy precepts?" Are you men of prayer? Are you always mindful that God sees you? Is that Redeemer, in whom alone is salvation for lost and ruined sinners, and who hath delivered his people from the wrath to come, is he your hope, your comfort, your joy, your all in all? If, brethren, you can adopt the language of the text, and God, who seeth and knoweth all things, allows your claim, such is your character; but if, notwithstanding all your knowledge, all your profession, such is not your character, you seem to have neither part nor lot in this great and invaluable blessing. And oh! in that case how will you be able to meet death? how will you make your appearance before the judgment-seat of Christ? And yet, die you must!—stand at the dread tribunal you must!—no dispensation can possibly be obtained! And ah! who can tell but ere to-morrow

morrow dawns, some poor self-deceiver may find himself in eternity? Happy will it be for him now to take warning, now to seek to know on good evidence that "God hath not appointed him to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." May God forbid that any despairing sinner should so mistake the design of this discourse as to go away without obtaining relief; without deriving hope and encouragement from that free grace and rich mercy of God which I have endeavoured to set before them! but may he be pleased to give such efficacy to the word which hath been spoken, that whilst believers are edified and established, and some careless, thoughtless sinners are plucked as brands from the burning, the feeble-minded may be comforted, and the weak supported; so that all the great ends of the christian ministry may be answered, and, as an instrument in God's hands, "I may both save myself and them that hear me!"

SERMON XX.

CHARITY TO POOR CHILDREN

RECOMMENDED FROM THE

COMPASSION OF PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER
TO MOSES.

FROM EXODUS II. 5, 6.

SECTION XX.

CHARITY TO POOR CHILDREN

RECOMMENDED THAT THE
COMMISSION OF PARISHES DAUGHTER
TO MOSES

FROM EXORDS II. 3. 6.

EXODUS II. 5, 6.

When she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and, behold, the babe wept, and she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrew's children.

ONE end of our assembling together this day, is to unite in a work of christian love, and, no doubt, every individual is ready to concur with it; but, as is customary on these occasions, you must allow me to stir up your minds by way of remembrance, stating before you the nature, and the great utility of the work which is to be forwarded; and calling upon, and exciting you, to the exercise of the most liberal benevolence. The words which I have read to you by way of text, are part of a piece of sacred history, which may very seasonably be brought to your recollection, and which will afford me a favourable opportunity of addressing you in a suitable manner.

414. *Charity to poor Children recommended.*

manner. May I be enabled so to speak, and you so to hear, that every end of our assembling, may be abundantly answered; and to God be the praise, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

You need scarcely, brethren, to be reminded of the great temporal salvation which Joseph the son of the patriarch Jacob was the means of effecting in the land of Egypt; of the honours which in consequence thereof were conferred on him in the Egyptian court, nor of the high veneration in which he was universally held. We are informed at the 8th verse of the chapter preceding our text, that after the decease of Joseph, and the death of the king, who had so caressed and exalted him, there arose up a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph, one who was not grateful for all the advantages and additions of wealth and power, which Joseph had been the instrument of obtaining for that kingdom; and we learn from the following verses, how he sought to extirpate all the kindred of his nation's benefactor, first by afflicting them with hard bondage, making them to serve him as slaves, with the utmost rigour: secondly, charging

charging the midwives to act the basest and most diabolical part, by secretly destroying every son that should be born to them: and, thirdly, (finding the two former plans ineffectual) by publishing openly this cruel, horrid, and most unnatural edict, that of Herod alone excepted, which ever disgraced humanity. Chap. i. ver. 22. "And Pharaoh charged all
" his people, saying, Every son that is born
" ye shall cast into the river, and every
" daughter ye shall save alive," thus making it death to every mother who should not deliver up to the executors of the infernal edict her male child, and likewise to every individual who should aid a concealment.

We read at the commencement of chap. ii. 1, 2. "And there went a man of the house of
" Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.
" And the woman conceived and bare a son:
" and when she saw him that he was a goodly
" child, she hid him three months." What parent does not esteem its own, as goodly? But there was something in the countenance of this child, we may well suppose, peculiarly engaging. St. Stephen, in his description of him, Acts vii. 20. says, that he was
" exceeding

“exceeding fair,” or fair to God, as the original text may be translated. Whence we are led to conceive, that though an infant, there was a peculiar dignity and sanctity in his appearance, which, besides the common feelings of parental affection, made his parents the more desirous of saving his life; thinking, very probably, that he might be the person appointed by God to deliver his people from their Egyptian bondage; or through whom the still greater deliverer of the human race, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world, should come. Indeed, the apostle’s words, Heb. xi. 23. give some countenance to this idea; and indicate, that his parents had some extraordinary presentiments in their minds respecting his future destination. “By faith
 “Moses when he was born was hid three
 “months of his parents, because they saw he
 “was a proper child; and they were not
 “afraid of the king’s commandment.”

You need not, I trust, brethren, to be informed, that this child, in his concealment, was an early and eminent type of Christ Jesus, who was concealed in the same land of Egypt, in consequence of a similar edict, published by

by king Herod ! But we will proceed with the account of Moses's preservation, by referring you to ver. 3 and 4. " And when " she (his mother) could not longer hide " him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, " and daubed it with slime and with pitch, " and put the child therein ; and she laid it " in the flags by the river's brink. And his " sister stood afar off, to wit what would be " done to him." As the child grew, it became more difficult to conceal him ; and, perhaps, the difficulty increased by more strict searches being made after the innocent victims. And the faith of his parents failing them, to save their own lives, they devised the expedient of which we have read ; it was an expedient which gave the child what we are apt to call, a chance for its life, but humanly speaking, it was a very poor chance ; and faint, indeed, must have been its mother's hope (who, no doubt, was almost overcome with grief, and refused to be comforted !) whilst the sister, who anxiously watched the feeble bark, little expected to have carried home any other than the most doleful tidings. But mark, brethren, the ways of Providence ! See the hand of God seasonably stretched out for

418 *Charity to poor Children recommended.*

Moses's preservation, and learn, in all straits and difficulties with the Father of the faithful, "against hope to believe in hope." Rom. iv. 18.

Our faith may fail, but God will not fail in the execution of his gracious purposes towards them that fear him. We read, ver. 5. "The daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side." It is hard to conjecture whether the sister of Moses, who stood watching at a distance, had an increase of hope or fear, when she observed the approach of the Egyptian princess. She might indeed think, that now the little bark would be discovered, and the infant mariner preserved; but as Pharaoh's daughter was the person who would make the discovery, she might, on the other hand, reasonably conclude that, let the daughter's disposition be ever so amiable and compassionate, filial duty would compel her to promote the execution of her father's sanguinary edict. But all was under the controul of God; all was wisely and graciously ordered by his overruling providence. Hence it is added, "And when she
" saw

“ saw the ark among the flags, she sent her
“ maid to fetch it. And when she had opened
“ it, she saw the child; and, behold, the
“ babe wept.” ‘ Never babe (says one) wept
‘ so seasonably, so happily, as this did.’ Its
fair and beautiful features could not but
engage the clemency of a susceptible heart;
but its tears, its pitiable moan for the loss of
a fond mother’s hand, its tears which streamed
over its angelic face, would have moved a
heart of adamant! The Egyptian princess,
notwithstanding the prejudices of her educa-
tion, her regard for her father, and her fear
of incurring his displeasure, was not proof
against them. Her sensibilities were all
awakened in favour of the poor little sup-
pliant. “ And she had compassion on him,
“ and said, This is one of the Hebrew’s
“ children,” which my father has doomed to
death, but I will hazard his frown, and save
the life of this beautiful infant.

My friends and brethren, the compassion
which graced the character of Pharaoh’s
daughter is the compassion which you are
called upon to give your support to this day;
and, suffer me to say, it is the compassion which

has been evidenced to you and me. Behold those poor children (the representatives of near 200) of the same description. Behold those poor children who have joined in our worship of the great God, and sung, in our hearing, to the praise of his holy name. Brethren, they were born without the advantages with which some of you were favoured; they were born the children of poverty—of want—of distress. They were born, very liable to perish, as to both worlds; for without care, and a virtuous education, What can be hoped for? what, rather, should I have said, can be expected, than that children without those assistances will turn out dissolute and bad as to this world, and finally perish beneath the wrath of God?

A parent's solicitude for their welfare, aided by a kind and friendly hand, hath afforded them the only hope remaining of being preserved; hath placed them within the walls of a truly charitable institution, and, by the providence of God, they are this day brought to your notice, and powerfully call up every tender feeling! Can you see the ark floating upon the billows and waves of this troublesome, this dangerous world? Can you look
upon

upon so many defenceless, destitute, engaging children? Can you hear their silent, but moving, cries to you for succour, and not have compassion on them? Forbid it, Humanity! Forbid it, the religion of Jesus Christ! As partakers of human nature, you must, undoubtedly, commiserate their condition. As partakers of a divine nature, your hearts must burn with love and piety: for that grace which changes and renews the heart, and fits us for the kingdom of Heaven, refines and purifies, and heightens every kind and sympathetic feeling. But I also said, that the compassion which graced the character of Pharaoh's daughter, is the compassion which you are called upon to evidence this day,

Brethren, like the male children of the Israelites, under the reign of that cruel and sanguinary monarch, we were born under a sentence of death. Our first parents sinned. Death (temporal, spiritual, and eternal) was denounced upon them; and as the apostle expresses it, Rom. v. 12. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Every infant that is born, is born to die: and it is asked, Psalm lxxxix. 48. "What man is he

422 *Charity to poor Children recommended.*

“ that liveth, and shall not see death ?” And, brethren, as descendants of sinful parents, and as sinners ourselves, we were liable to die, as to the next world, i. e. to perish for ever under the wrath of God. Indeed, the situation of the child in the ark of bulrushes, by the river’s brink, may be considered as emblematical of our situation before God as sinners. We were left entirely to compassion, to divine compassion ; there was no human hand that could deliver us ; nor could we deliver ourselves : compassion came from the court above. The Son of God, of the God who had been offended, of the God who justly denounced the sentence of death upon us, of the God who might have suffered us to perish, and yet been just and righteous. The Son of God, I say, beheld our misery ; his affections were kindled ; his bowels of compassion were moved, The compassion which graced the character of Pharaoh’s daughter, is but a faint representation of that which was evidenced towards us by the Son of God ! Only turn to the 16th chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel, and at the beginning of it, the natural state of Jerusalem, and the natural state of all mankind, is represented under the similitude of a forlorn and

and wretched infant; whilst, in the 5th and 6th verses, the divine compassion is thus pathetically described: "None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." Yes, brethren, we were all exposed to death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. We all lay on the brink of ruin: the Son of God saw us, and had compassion on us; and, by his grace, we are what we are.

But to pursue the sacred history from the 7th to the middle of the 9th verse; "Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go, and the maid went, and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." The child's sister acted a truly

wife and loving part. With pleasure she had noticed the pity and compassion which the amiable princess evidenced towards her infant brother; and she eagerly embraced the opportunity of recommending the best of nurses. And can words express, can heart conceive, the mother's joy, when she was introduced to Pharaoh's daughter to take the care of her dear, her darling boy?

But the particular which I would here dwell upon is, the kind of compassion which graced the character of the Egyptian princess. It was not merely a look of pity that she cast upon the forlorn babe; it was not merely a tear of sympathy which she dropped over him: it was not such an exclamation as Alas! Alas! poor child! No, her compassion was of the noblest, the truest kind. She immediately resolved to preserve the babe; and when (watching the glad moment, the child's mother was brought forward) she charges the strictest care to be taken of him, and promises the fullest reward, "Take this child, and
 "nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy
 "wages," ver. 9.—This was compassion, indeed; I hope, my brethren, that your com-
 passion

passion this day, towards those poor children, will be equally noble, equally true. What, indeed, will avail to the advantage and preservation of those children, all your pity, all those soft emotions of clemency, which now swell your feeling hearts? What will all avail if you do not put forth the helping hand? If, while I introduce to your notice that truly charitable institution in which those children are placed, and where they experience a parent's care, you do not liberally assist? Compassion, brethren, like faith, is nothing worth, is not deserving of the name it bears, unless it actuates to works of love: and, for a proof of this, let me refer you to what St. James says, chap. ii. ver. 14, 15, 16. where he shews us the total inefficacy of a mere notional faith. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and filled; notwithstanding, ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" And what the apostle here speaks of faith, may be
as

426 *Charity to poor Children recommended.*

as well spoken of compassion, " what doth
" it profit ?" What indeed any more than
faith, if it be not accompanied with corre-
sponding actions? it will neither be acceptable
to God; nor beneficial to man. But I do not,
I will not, cherish the thought that there is an
individual in this assembly, whose compassion
towards these poor children will not be shewn
by a free and liberal donation.

Let me remind you, brethren, of the na-
ture of the divine compassion towards us.
That, you know, was not without a work of
love which astonished men and angels. Ah !
brethren, had the Redeemer beheld and pitied
us, and no more, we had been for ever
wretched, we had perished everlastingly ! But
his compassion moved him to lay aside his
glory, to veil himself in human flesh, to come
into our world in the likeness of man, to live
a life of poverty and distress, and at last to
suffer death upon the cross ' for us men and
' for our salvation.' On this occasion, there-
fore, I may well address you in his own words
to his Apostles, when he sent them forth to
preach the Gospel and heal the sick, Matt.
x. 8. " Freely ye have received, freely give."

How

How sublimely does the excellent author of the Night Thoughts speak of what it cost to redeem our souls !

- ' The Ransom was paid down: the fund of heaven!
- ' Heaven's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,
- ' Amazing and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,
- ' All price beyond: tho' curious to compute,
- ' Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum ;
- ' Its value vast ungraspt by minds create
- ' For ever hides, and glows, in the Supreme.—
- ' And was the Ransom paid ? it was : and paid
- ' (What can exalt the bounty more ?) for you !

Yes, brethren, for to quote an higher authority, " we were not redeemed," as St. Peter writes, 1 Epist. i. 18, 19. " with corruptible
" things, as silver and gold, from your vain
" conversation received by tradition from your
" fathers ; but with the precious blood of
" Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and
" without spot." And surely after this, that
man's religion must be vain, whose hand does
not move with his heart in favour of those
poor children, especially as their Lord and
ours hath condescended to assure us, that
whatsoever is done to them, he will consider
as done unto himself. See Matt. xxv. 34—

41.

Once

Once more; let me refer you to the miraculous preservation of Moses, ver. 9, 10. "And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son: and she called his name Moses; and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."—Mothers are well said to be the best of nurses, and no wonder that so promising a child should thrive by means of such good care. But his generous patroness did not stop here; the child, when nursed, was properly educated. Pharaoh's daughter adopted him for her own son, and gave him an education suitable with the rank to which she had elevated him, St. Stephen affirming, Acts vii. 22. that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words and in deeds." Little could the fond mother have thought on such great things when she put her child into the ark of bulrushes, and "laid it in the flags by the river's brink." But the conjectures she was led, from the appearance and manner of his earliest infancy, to form respecting him, were both answered and exceeded: for this poor deserted babe was he who, in the wonder-

wonderful counsels of Him who seeth not as man seeth, was to be the deliverer of God's ancient people; and the type and forerunner of Him who should deliver us from the captivity of Satan, the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation—this was *Moses*, so called by Pharaoh's daughter from the circumstance of his being drawn out of the water, for the word, in the Egyptian language, signifies *drawn out*.

And permit me, brethren, from the sequel of this sacred history to encourage you to shew the same compassion which graced the character of the Egyptian princess, permit me to encourage you to the exercise of the most liberal benevolence. The charitable Institution in which these poor children are placed, has every advantage to recommend itself to your notice and patronage. The children are therein taught all that is needful to make them useful members of society, and instructed in the holy Scriptures, “which,” as St. Paul observes to Timothy, 2d Epist. iii. 15. “are able to make them wise unto “salvation.” They are all clothed in the comfortable, decent manner which you behold; and many of the young females are entirely

430 *Charity to poor Children recommended.*

entirely taken off the hands of their poor parents, are wholly maintained in the school-house, and by this means are likely to be preserved from evil example and corrupt communications, and rendered more fit and desirable as servants in christian families. Such, brethren, are the advantages of institutions like this—some of the first characters in the nation have dated their prosperity both of soul and body from the hour that a parent's sollicitation, aided by a kind and friendly hand, placed them in so safe an ark! and no doubt but in that great day, when we shall "all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," many will be found at his right hand, who were brought to know him and believe on him by means of the Institution for which I plead!

Here again, brethren, let me speak of the effect of the divine compassion towards us—Indeed it has raised us from the lowest ebb of misery to the highest state of honour and happiness!—from being "by nature children of wrath even as others," we are become, by grace, 'members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven!'

‘ heaven !’ Yes, my christian brethren, every one who has laid hold on the hope set before him in the Gospel, every one who has truly received Christ Jesus the Lord is a child of God by spiritual adoption, and as such is entitled to all the glory and felicity of the upper world. Hear what St. Paul says on this great subject, Rom. viii. 14—18. “ As many as
“ are led by the Spirit of God, they are the
“ sons of God. For ye have not received
“ the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye
“ have received the spirit of adoption, whereby
“ we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself
“ beareth witness with our spirit that we are
“ the children of God. And if children,
“ then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs
“ with Christ : if so be that we suffer with
“ him, that we may be also glorified together.”—Brethren, I am at a loss how to speak to you on the great, the glorious, the everlasting benefits conferred upon us by the love of the Son of God ! With the words, therefore, of another Apostle I shall conclude this part of my discourse ; I mean the words of St. John, in the first and second verses of the third chapter of his first epistle—“ Be-
“ hold, what manner of love the Father hath
“ bestowed

“ bestowed upon us, that we should be called
 “ the sons of God! therefore the world know-
 “ eth us not, because it knew him not. Be-
 “ loved, now are we the sons of God, and it
 “ doth not yet appear what we shall be: but
 “ we know that, when he shall appear, we
 “ shall be like him; for we shall see him as
 “ he is.” Oh may every one that names the
 name of Christ become, by grace, such a
 Christian as to be included in this appeal of
 the beloved disciple!

And now, brethren, what remains but that
 I just remind you, that some of the trustees
 of this truly charitable Institution introduced
 to your notice, will wait to receive the proofs
 of your love and compassion at the doors of
 the chapel; and that once more directing your
 attention yonder, I say to you, *These* are a few,
 out of near two hundred, of the poor Chris-
 tians who cry to you for succour!—Come,
 my brethren, give us good proof of your com-
 passion: shew that your hearts are susceptible
 of all the fine feelings of humanity: shew
 that the holy, loving religion of the Lord
 Jesus dwells richly in you, and sweetly con-
 strains you to imitate the divine compassion.

Let

Let it be far from any of you to begin to make excuse. If, brethren, these children are not the children of the parish in which you were born, or in which you now reside, what of that? When Pharaoh's daughter opened the ark of bulrushes, and beheld the weeping babe, was she devoid of compassion because it was "one of the Hebrews children?" Oh no! that very circumstance inclined her the more to exercise it.

My dear brethren, as a people who at stated times assemble here to worship God, it is certainly our duty to unite in works of christian love; and till the plan which I once proposed to you, that I mean of forming a charitable institution of our own, till that plan can be put in execution, we should annually, at least, assist other charities. And there are two powerful reasons which induced me to bring forward this Charity to-day, and to shew my warm wishes for its welfare by taking the place of a better advocate. One reason is, that the chapel in Great Queen-street, which afforded these poor children two charity sermons in the year, is no longer a chapel of ease to St. Giles's parish, whereby the annual ser-

mons cease: and the other reason is, that having the happiness of being Lecturer of St. Giles's, I felt it my duty to step forward at such a time, and to avail myself of an opportunity of recommending the charity-schools of that and the united parish to your compassionate regard this year. These reasons I am sure you will deem sufficient, and I doubt not but your work of love will be such as is expected. Give me leave to say, that to *me* those children stand in a very endearing relation; they, their parents, and many of their supporters, are attendants on my ministry. Indeed to *me* they are the same endeared as that little flock will be, which I hope we shall one day gather here: and though, brethren, what you give, you will give from motives of christian love towards these worthy objects, yet I have that high opinion of your esteem for me, as to think that you will be *particularly* liberal to an Institution, which, as in duty bound, I do most earnestly recommend to you; especially as I can do it under the fullest confidence that all proper care is taken of the education of the children. The compassion, therefore, which graced the character of Pharaoh's daughter, will I hope grace your
characters

characters on this day: and, above all, the compassion of the Son of God will I trust be imitated by you. Remember what it cost to make you the children of God, and oh blush to think of a mean and unworthy gift! Let the compassion of your hearts direct your hands: give liberally, give cheerfully, for "God loveth a cheerful giver."

I will say no more, for more I ought not to say. I commend the Charity to your love; I commend you to God; and oh may he dispose all to do that which is becoming those who name his holy name!

Now to God the Father, &c.

FINIS.

21/10/40 a/-

Christians to your children's commitment
I transfer to this day and night all the
compassion of the Son of God to all the
children of your household. What it cost to
redeem you the children of God, and to bring
to light of a man and woman's heart. Let
the compassion of your heart direct your
steps. Give liberally, give cheerfully, for
God loves a cheerful giver.

With love and prayer for you I ought not
to forget. I commit this offering to your love.
I commend you to God, and to His
mercies, all to do that which is becoming to
the name of the Father.

89 Y 6

FINIS